Mr. GAY.

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FABLES

BY THE LATE

MR. GAY.

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FABLES

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Mr. GAY.

INTRODUCTION TO THE FABLES.

PART THE FIRST.

The SHEPHERD and the PHILOSOPHER.

REMOTE from cities liv'd a ſwain,
Unvex'd with all the cares of gain;
His head was ſilver'd o'er with age,
And long experience made him ſage;
In ſummer's heat, and winter's cold,
He fed his flock, and penn'd the fold;
His hours in chearful labour flew,
Nor envy nor ambition knew:
His wiſdom and his honeſt fame
Through all the country rais'd his name.
A deep philoſopher (whoſe rules
Of moral life were drawn from ſchools)
The Shepherd's homely cottage ſought,
And thus explor'd his reach of thought.

Whence is thy learning? Hath thy toil
O'er books consum'd the midnight oil?
Hast thou old Greece and Rome survey'd,
And the vast sense of PLATO weigh'd?
Hath SOCRATES thy soul refin'd,
And hast thou fathom'd TULLY'S mind?
Or, like the wise ULYSSES, thrown,
By various fates, on realms unknown,
Hast thou through many cities stray'd,
Their customs, laws, and manners weigh'd?
The Shepherd modestly reply'd,
I ne'er the paths of learning try'd;
Nor have I roam'd in foreign parts
To read mankind, their laws and arts;
For man is practis'd in disguise,
He cheats the most discerning eyes;
Who by that search shall wiser grow,
When we ourselves can never know?
The little knowledge I have gain'd,
Was all from simple nature drain'd;
Hence my life's maxims took their rise,
Hence grew my settled hate to vice.
The daily labours of the bee
Awake my soul to industry.
Who can observe the careful ant,
And not provide for future want?
My dog (the trustiest of his kind)
With gratitude inflames my mind:
I mark his true, his faithful way,
And in my service copy Tray.
In constancy and nuptial love,
I learn my duty from the dove.
The hen, who from the chilly air,
With pious wing protects her care;
And ev'ry fowl that flies at large,
Instructs me in a parent's charge.
From nature too I take my rule,
To shun contempt and ridicule.
I never, with important air,
In conversation overbear.

Can

Can grave and formal paſs for wiſe,
When men the ſolemn owl deſpiſe?
My tongue within my lips I rein;
For who talks much, muſt talk in vain.
We from the wordy torrent fly:
Who liſtens to the chatt'ring pye?
Nor would I, with felonious flight,
By ſtealth invade my neighbour's right.
Rapacious animals we hate:
Kites, hawks, and wolves, deſerve their fate.
Do not we juſt abhorrence find
Againſt the toad and ſerpent kind?
But envy, calumny, and ſpite,
Bear ſtronger venom in their bite.
Thus ev'ry object of creation
Can furniſh hints to contemplation;
And from the moſt minute and mean,
A virtuous mind can morals glean.
Thy fame is juſt, the ſage replies;
Thy virtue proves thee truly wiſe.
Pride often guides the author's pen,
Books as affected are as men:
But he who ſtudies nature's laws,
From certain truth his maxims draws;
And thoſe, without our ſchools, ſuffice,
To make men moral, good, and wiſe.

TO HIS HIGHNESS

WILLIAM

DUKE OF CUMBERLAND.

FABLE I.

The LION, the TYGER, and the TRAVELLER.

ACCEPT, young PRINCE, the moral lay,
And in theſe tales mankind ſurvey;
With early virtues plant your breaſt,
The ſpecious arts of vice deteſt.

Princes, like beauties, from their youth
Are ſtrangers to the voice of truth.
Learn to contemn all praiſe betimes;
For flattery's the nurſe of crimes:
Friendſhip by ſweet reproof is ſhown,
(A virtue never near a throne;)
In courts ſuch freedom muſt offend,
There none preſumes to be a friend.
To thoſe of your exalted ſtation
Each courtier is a dedication.
Muſt I too flatter like the reſt,
And turn my morals to a jeſt?
The muſe diſdains to ſteal from thoſe,
Who thrive in courts by fulſome proſe.
But ſhall I hide your real praiſe,
Or tell you what a nation ſays?
They in your infant boſom trace
The virtues of your royal race;
In the fair dawning of your mind
Diſcern you gen'rous, mild, and kind;
They ſee you grieve to hear diſtreſs,
And pant already to redreſs.
Go on, the height of good attain,
Nor let a nation hope in vain.
From hence we juſtly may preſage
The virtues of a riper age.
True courage ſhall your boſom fire,
And future actions own your ſire.
Cowards are cruel, but the brave
Love mercy, and delight to ſave.

A Tyger roaming for his prey,
Sprung on a Trav'ler in the way;
The proſtrate game a Lion ſpies,
And on the greedy tyrant flies;
With mingled roar reſounds the wood,
Their teeth, their claws diſtil with blood;
'Till vanquiſh'd by the Lion's ſtrength,
The ſpotted foe extends his length.

The

The man beſought the ſhaggy lord,
And on his knees for life implor'd.
His life the gen'rous hero gave;
Together walking to his cave,
The Lion thus beſpoke his gueſt.
What hardy beaſt ſhall dare conteſt
My matchleſs ſtrength! You ſaw the fight,
And muſt atteſt my pow'r and right.
Forc'd to forego their native home,
My ſtarving ſlaves at diſtance roam.
Within theſe woods I reign alone,
The boundleſs foreſt is my own.
Bears, wolves, and all the ſavage brood,
Have dy'd the regal den with blood.
Theſe carcaſſes on either hand,
Thoſe bones that whiten all the land,
My former deeds and triumphs tell,
Beneath theſe jaws what numbers fell.
True, ſays the Man, the ſtrength I ſaw
Might well the brutal nation awe:
But ſhall a monarch, brave like you,
Place glory in ſo falſe a view?
Robbers invade their neighbour's right.
Be lov'd: let juſtice bound your might.
Mean are ambitious heroes boaſts
Of waſted lands and ſlaughter'd hoſts.
Pirates their pow'r by murders gain,
Wiſe kings by love and mercy reign.
To me your clemency hath ſhown
The virtue worthy of a throne.
Heav'n gives you pow'r above the reſt,
Like heav'n to ſuccour the diſtreſt.
The caſe is plain, the Monarch ſaid;
Falſe glory hath my youth miſled;
For beaſts of prey, a ſervile train,
Have been the flatt'rers of my reign.
You reaſon well. Yet tell me, friend,
Did ever you in courts attend?
For all my fawning rogues agree,
That human heroes rule like me.

FABLE II.

The SPANIEL and the CAMELEON.

A Spaniel, bred with all the care
That waits upon a fav'rite heir.
Ne'er felt correction's rigid hand;
Indulg'd to diſobey command,
In pamper'd eaſe his hours were ſpent;
He never knew what learning meant.
Such forward airs, ſo pert, ſo ſmart,
Were ſure to win his lady's heart;
Each little miſchief gain'd him praiſe;
How pretty were his fawning ways!

The wind was ſouth, the morning fair,
He ventures forth to take the air.
He ranges all the meadow round,
And rolls upon the ſofteſt ground:
When near him a Cameleon ſeen,
Was ſcarce diſtinguiſh'd from the green.
Dear emblem of the flatt'ring hoſt,
What, live with clowns! a genius loſt?
To cities and the court repair;
A fortune cannot fail thee there:
Preferment ſhall thy talents crown,
Believe me, friend; I know the town.
Sir, ſays the Sycophant, like you,
Of old, politer life I knew:
Like you, a courtier born and bred;
Kings lean'd their ear to what I ſaid.
My whiſper always met ſucceſs;
The Ladies prais'd me for addreſs.
I knew to hit each courtier's paſſion,
And flatter'd every vice in faſhion.
But JOVE, who hates the liar's ways,
At once cut ſhort my proſp'rous days;
And, ſentenc'd to retain my nature,
Transform'd me to this crawling creature.

Doom'd

Doom'd to a life obſcure and mean,
I wander in the ſylvan ſcene.
For JOVE the heart alone regards;
He puniſhes what man rewards,
How diff'rent is thy caſe and mine!
With men at leaſt you ſup and dine;
While I, condemn'd to thinneſt fare,
Like thoſe I flatter'd, feed on air.

FABLE III.

The MOTHER, the NURSE, and the FAIRY.

GIVE me a ſon. The bleſſing ſent,
Were ever parents more content?
How partial are their doating eyes!
No child is half ſo fair and wiſe.
Wak'd to the morning's pleaſing care,
The mother roſe, and ſought her heir.
She ſaw the Nurſe, like one poſſeſs'd,
With wringing hands, and ſobbing breaſt.
Sure ſome diſaſter has befel:
Speak, Nurſe; I hope the boy is well.
Dear Madam, think not me to blame;
Inviſible the Fairy came:
Your precious babe is hence convey'd,
And in the place a changeling laid.
Where are the father's mouth and noſe,
The mother's eyes, as black as ſloes?
See here, a ſhocking aukward creature,
That ſpeaks a fool in every feature.
The woman's blind, the Mother cries;
I ſee wit ſparkle in his eyes.
Lord! Madam, what a ſquinting leer!
No doubt the Fairy hath been here.
Juſt as ſhe ſpoke, a Pigmy Sprite
Pops through the key-hole, ſwift as light;
Perch'd on the cradle's top he ſtands,
And thus her folly reprimands.

Whence ſprung the vain conceited lie,
That we the world with fools ſupply?
What! give our ſprightly race away,
For the dull helpleſs ſons of clay!
Beſides, by partial fondneſs ſhown,
Like you we doat upon our own.
Where yet was ever found a mother,
Who'd give her booby for another?
And ſhould we change with human breed,
Well might we paſs for fools indeed.

FABLE IV.

The EAGLE, and the Aſſembly of ANIMALS.

AS JUPITER's all-ſeeing eye
Survey'd the worlds beneath the sky,
From this ſmall ſpeck of earth were ſent,
Murmurs and ſounds of diſcontent;
For ev'ry thing alive complain'd,
That he the hardeſt life ſuſtain'd.
JOVE calls the Eagle. At the word
Before him ſtands the royal bird.
The bird, obedient, from heav'n's height,
Downward directs his rapid flight;
Then cited ev'ry living thing,
To hear the mandates of his king.
Ungrateful creatures, whence ariſe
Theſe murmurs which offend the skies?
Why this diſorder? ſay the cauſe:
For juſt are JOVE's eternal laws.
Let each his diſcontent reveal;
To you, ſour Dog, I firſt appeal.
Hard is my lot, the Hound replies,
On what fleet nerves the Greyhound flies!
While I, with weary ſtep and ſlow,
O'er plains and vales, and mountains go.
The morning ſees my chaſe begun,
Nor ends it till the ſetting ſun.
When (ſays the Greyhound) I purſue,
My game is loſt, or caught in view;

Beyond my ſight the prey's ſecure:
The Hound is ſlow, but always ſure.
And had I his ſagacious ſcent,
JOVE ne'er had heard my diſcontent.
The Lion crav'd the Fox's art;
The Fox, the Lion's force and heart.
The Cock implor'd the Pigeon's flight,
Whoſe wings were rapid, ſtrong, and light;
The Pigeon ſtrength of wing deſpis'd,
And the Cock's matchleſs valour priz'd:
The Fiſhes wiſh'd to graze the plain;
The Beaſts, to skim beneath the main.
Thus, envious of another's ſtate,
Each blam'd the partial hand of Fate.
The bird of heav'n then cry'd aloud,
JOVE bids diſperſe the murm'ring crowd;
The God rejects your idle prayers.
Would ye, rebellious mutineers,
Entirely change your name and nature,
And be the very envy'd creature?
What, ſilent all, and none conſent!
Be happy then, and learn content:
Nor imitate the reſtleſs mind,
And proud ambition of mankind.

FABLE V.

The WILD BOAR and the RAM.

AGainſt an elm a ſheep was ty'd,
The butcher's knife in blood was dy'd:
The patient flock, in ſilent fright,
From far beheld the horrid ſight.
A ſavage Boar, who near them ſtood,
Thus mock'd to ſcorn the fleecy brood.
All cowards ſhould be ſerv'd like you.
See, ſee, your murd'rer is in view:
With purple hands, and reeking knife,
He ſtrips the skin yet warm with life:

Your quarter'd ſires, your bleeding dams,
The dying bleat of harmleſs lambs,
Call for revenge. O ſtupid race!
The heart that wants revenge, is baſe.
I grant, an ancient ram replies,
We bear no terror in our eyes;
Yet think us not of ſoul ſo tame,
Which no repeated wrongs inflame;
Inſenſible of ev'ry ill,
Becauſe we want thy tusks to kill.
Know, thoſe who violence purſue,
Give to themſelves the vengeance due;
For in theſe maſſacres they find
The two chief plagues that waſte mankind.
Our skin ſupplies the wrangling bar,
It wakes their ſlumb'ring ſons to war;
And well revenge may reſt contented,
Since drums and parchment were invented.

FABLE VI.

The MISER and PLUTUS.

THE wind was high, the window ſhakes,
With ſudden ſtart the Miſer wakes;
Along the ſilent room he ſtalks;
Looks back, and trembles as he walks!
Each lock and ev'ry bolt he tries,
In ev'ry creek and corner pries;
Then opes the cheſt with treaſure ſtor'd,
And ſtands in rapture o'er his hoard.
But, now with ſudden qualms poſſeſt,
He wrings his hands, he beats his breaſt,
By conſcience ſtung, he wildly ſtares;
And thus his guilty ſoul declares.
Had the deep earth her ſtores confin'd,
This heart had known ſweet peace of mind.
But virtue's ſold. Good gods! what price
Can recompenſe the pangs of vice!

O bane

O bane of good! ſeducing cheat!
Can man, weak man, thy power defeat?
Gold baniſh'd honour from the mind,
And only left the name behind;
Gold ſow'd the world with ev'ry ill;
Gold taught the murd'rer's ſword to kill:
'Twas gold inſtructed coward hearts,
In treach'ry's more pernicious arts.
Who can recount the miſchiefs o'er?
Virtue reſides on earth no more!
He ſpoke, and ſigh'd. In angry mood,
Plutus, his god, before him ſtood.
The Miſer trembling, lock'd his cheſt;
The Viſion frown'd, and thus addreſt.
Whence is thy vile ungrateful rant?
Each ſordid raſcal's daily cant.
Did I, baſe wretch, corrupt mankind?
The fault's in thy rapacious mind.
Becauſe my bleſſings are abus'd,
Muſt I be cenſur'd, curs'd, accus'd;
Ev'n virtue's ſelf by knaves is made
A cloak to carry on the trade;
And pow'r (when lodg'd in their poſſeſſion)
Grows tyranny, and rank oppreſſion.
Thus, when the villain crams his cheſt,
Gold is the canker of the breaſt;
'Tis avarice, inſolence, and pride,
And ev'ry ſhocking vice beſide.
But when to virtuous hands 'tis given,
It bleſſes, like the dews of heaven:
Like heav'n, it hears the orphans cries,
And wipes the tears from widows eyes;
Their crimes on gold ſhall miſers lay,
Who pawn'd their ſordid ſouls for pay?
Let bravoes then (when blood is ſpilt)
Upbraid the paſſive ſoul with guilt.

FABLE VII.

The LION, the FOX, and the GEESE.

A Lion, tir'd with ſtate affairs,
Quite ſick of pomp, and worn with cares,
Reſolv'd (remote from noiſe and ſtrife)
In peace to paſs his latter life.
It was proclaim'd; the day was ſet:
Behold the gen'ral council met.
The Fox was Viceroy nam'd. The crowd
To the new Regent humbly bow'd.
Wolves, bears, and mighty tygers bend,
And ſtrive who moſt ſhall condeſcend.
He ſtrait aſſumes a ſolemn grace,
Collects his wiſdom in his face.
The crowd admire his wit, his ſenſe:
Each word hath weight and conſequence.
The flatt'rer all his art diſplays:
He who hath power, is ſure of praiſe.
A Fox ſtept forth before the reſt,
And thus the ſervile throng addreſt.
How vaſt his talents, born to rule,
And train'd in virtue's honeſt ſchool!
What clemency his temper ſways!
How uncorrupt are all his ways!
Beneath his conduct and command,
Rapine ſhall ceaſe to waſte the land.
His brain hath ſtratagem and art;
Prudence and mercy rule his heart;
What bleſſings muſt attend the nation
Under this good adminiſtration!
He ſaid. A Gooſe, who diſtant ſtood,
Harangu'd apart the cackling brood.
Whene'er I hear a knave commend,
He bids me ſhun his worthy friend.
What praiſe! what mighty commendation!
But 'twas a Fox who ſpoke th' oration.
Foxes this government may prize,
As gentle, plentiful, and wiſe;

If

If they enjoy the ſweets, 'tis plain
We Geeſe muſt feel a tyrant reign.
What havock now ſhall thin our race,
When ev'ry petty clerk in place,
To prove his taſte, and ſeem polite,
Will feed on Geeſe both noon and night!

FABLE VIII.

The LADY and the WASP.

WHAT whiſpers muſt the Beauty bear?
What hourly nonſenſe haunts her ear!
Where e'er her eyes diſpenſe their charms,
Impertinence around her ſwarms.
Did not the tender nonſenſe ſtrike,
Contempt and ſcorn might look diſlike;
Forbidding airs might thin the place,
The ſlighteſt flap a fly can chaſe.
But who can drive the num'rous breed?
Chaſe one, another will ſucceed.
Who knows a fool, muſt know his brother;
One fop will recommend another:
And with this plague ſhe's rightly curſt,
Becauſe ſhe liſten'd to the firſt.

As DORIS, at her toilette's duty,
Sat meditating on her beauty,
She now was penſive, now was gay,
And loll'd the ſultry hours away.
As thus in indolence ſhe lies,
A giddy waſp around her flies.
He now advances, now retires,
Now to her neck and cheek aſpires.
Her fan in vain defends her charms;
Swift he returns, again alarms;
For by repulſe he bolder grew,
Perch'd on her lip, and ſipt the dew.
She frowns, ſhe frets. Good gods! ſhe cries,
Protect me from the teazing flies!

Of all the plagues that heav'n hath ſent,
A Waſp is moſt impertinent:
The hov'ring inſect thus complain'd,
Am I then ſlighted, ſcorn'd, diſdain'd?
Can ſuch offence your anger wake?
'Twas beauty caus'd the bold miſtake.
Thoſe cherry lips that breathe perfume,
That cheek ſo ripe with youthful bloom,
Made me with ſtrong deſire purſue
The faireſt peach that ever grew.
Strike him not, JENNY, DORIS cries,
Nor murder Waſps like vulgar flies:
For though he's free (to do him right)
The creature's civil and polite.
In ecſtacies away he poſts;
Where-e'er he came, the favour boaſts;
Brags how her ſweeteſt tea he ſips,
And ſhews the ſugar on his lips.
The hint alarm'd the forward crew.
Sure of ſucceſs, away they flew.
They ſhare the dainties of the day,
Round her with airy muſic play;
And now they flutter, now they reſt,
Now ſoar again, and ſkim her breaſt.
Nor were they baniſh'd, till ſhe found
That Waſps have ſtings, and felt the wound.

FABLE IX.

The BULL and the MASTIFF.

SEEK you to train your fav'rite boy?
Each caution, ev'ry care employ:
And ere you venture to confide,
Let his preceptor's heart be try'd:
Weigh well his manners, life and ſcope;
On theſe depend thy future hope.

As on a time, in peaceful reign,
A Bull enjoy'd the flow'ry plain,

A Maſtiff paſs'd; inflam'd with ire,
His eye-balls ſhot indignant fire;
He foam'd, he rag'd with thirſt of blood.
Spurning the ground the monarch ſtood,
And roar'd aloud, Suſpend the fight;
In a whole skin go ſleep to-night:
Or tell me, ere the battle rage,
What wrongs provoke thee to engage?
Is it ambition fires thy breaſt,
Or avarice that ne'er can reſt?
From theſe alone unjuſtly ſprings
The world-deſtroying wrath of kings.
The ſurly Maſtiff thus returns.
Within my boſom glory burns.
Like heroes of eternal name,
Whom poets ſing, I fight for fame.
The butcher's ſpirit-ſtirring mind
To daily war my youth inclin'd;
He train'd me to heroic deed;
Taught me to conquer, or to bleed.
Curs'd Dog, the Bull reply'd, no more
I wonder at thy thirſt of gore;
For thou (beneath a butcher train'd,
Whoſe hands with cruelty are ſtain'd,
His daily murders in thy view)
Muſt, like thy tutor, blood purſue.
Take then thy fate. With goring wound,
At once he lifts him from the ground;
Aloft the ſprawling hero flies,
Mangled he falls, he howls, and dies.

FABLE X.

The ELEPHANT and the BOOKSELLER.

THE man who with undaunted toils
Sails unknown ſeas to unknown ſoils,
With various wonders feaſts his ſight:
What ſtranger wonders does he write!

We read, and in deſcription view
Creatures which ADAM never knew:
For, when we risk no contradiction,
It prompts the tongue to deal in fiction.
Thoſe things that ſtartle me or you,
I grant are ſtrange; yet may be true.
Who doubts that Elephants are found
For ſcience and for ſenſe renown'd?
BORRI records their ſtrength of parts,
Extent of thought, and ſkill in arts;
How they perform the law's decrees,
And ſave the ſtate the hangman's fees;
And how by travel underſtand
The language of another land.
Let thoſe, who queſtion this report,
To PLINY's ancient page reſort.
How learn'd was that ſagacious breed!
Who now (like them) the Greek can read!

As one of theſe, in days of yore,
Rummag'd a ſhop of learning o'er;
Not, like our modern dealers, minding
Only the margin's breadth and binding;
A book his curious eye detains,
Where, with exacteſt care and pains,
Were ev'ry beaſt and bird portray'd,
That e'er the ſearch of man ſurvey'd,
Their natures and their powers were writ,
With all the pride of human wit.
The page he with attention ſpread,
And thus remark'd on what he read.

Man with ſtrong reaſon is endow'd;
A beaſt ſcarce inſtinct is allow'd.
But let this author's worth be try'd,
'Tis plain that neither was his guide.
Can he diſcern the diff'rent natures,
And weigh the pow'rs of other creatures,
Who by the partial work hath ſhown
He knows ſo little of his own?

How

How falſly is the ſpaniel drawn!
Did man from him firſt learn to fawn?
A dog proficient in the trade!
He, the chief flatt'rer nature made!
Go, Man, the ways of courts diſcern,
You'll find a ſpaniel ſtill might learn.
How can the fox's theft and plunder
Provoke his cenſure or his wonder?
From courtiers tricks, and lawyers arts,
The fox might well improve his parts.
The lion, wolf, and tyger's brood,
He curſes, for their thirſt of blood:
But is not man to man a prey?
Beaſts kill for hunger, men for pay.
The Bookſeller, who heard him ſpeak,
And ſaw him turn a page of Greek,
Thought, what a genius have I found!
Then thus addreſs'd with bow profound.
Learn'd Sir, if you'd employ your pen
Againſt the ſenſeleſs ſons of men,
Or write the Hiſtory of Siam,
No man is better pay than I am;
Or, ſince you're learn'd in Greek, let's ſee
Something againſt the Trinity.
When wrinkling with a ſneer his trunk,
Friend, quoth the Elephant, you're drunk;
E'en keep your money, and be wiſe:
Leave man on man to criticiſe;
For that you ne'er can want a pen
Among the ſenſeleſs ſons of men.
They unprovok'd will court the fray:
Envy's a ſharper ſpur than pay.
No author ever ſpar'd a brother;
Wits are game-cocks to one another.

FABLE XI.

The PEACOCK, the TURKEY, and the GOOSE.

IN beauty faults conſpicuous grow;
The ſmalleſt ſpeck is ſeen on ſnow.

As near a barn, by hunger led,
A Peacock with the Poultry fed;
All view'd him with an envious eye,
And mock'd his gaudy pageantry.
He, conſcious of ſuperior merit,
Contemns their baſe reviling ſpirit;
His ſtate and dignity aſſumes,
And to the ſun diſplays his plumes;
Which, like the heav'n's o'er-arch ng skies,
Are ſpangled with a thouſand eyes.
The circling rays, and varied light,
At once confound their dazzled ſight:
On ev'ry tongue detraction burns,
And malice prompts their ſpleen by turns.
Mark, with what inſolence and pride,
The creature takes his haughty ſtride,
The Turkey cries. Can ſpleen contain?
Sure never bird was half ſo vain!
But were intrinſic merit ſeen,
We Turkeys have the whiter skin.
From tongue to tongue they caught abuſe;
And next was heard the hiſſing Gooſe.
What hideous legs! what filthy claws!
I ſcorn to cenſure little flaws.
Then what a horrid ſqualling throat!
Ev'n owls are frighted at the note.
True. Thoſe are faults, the Peacock cries;
My ſcream, my ſhanks you may deſpiſe:
But ſuch blind criticks rail in vain:
What, overlook my radiant train!
Know, did my legs (your ſcorn and ſport)
The Turkey or the Gooſe ſupport,
And did ye ſcream with harſher ſound,
Thoſe faults in you had ne'er been found;
To all apparent beauties blind,
Each blemiſh ſtrikes an envious mind.

Thus in Aſſemblies have I ſeen
A nymph of brighteſt charms and mien,

Wake

Wake envy in each ugly face;
And buzznig ſcandal fills the place.

FABLE XII.

CUPID, HYMEN, and PLUTUS.

AS Cupid in Cythera's grove
Employ'd the leſſer powers of love;
Some ſhape the bow, or fit the ſtring;
Some give the taper ſhaft its wing,
Or turn the poliſh'd quiver's mould,
Or head the darts with temper'd gold.
Amidſt their toil and various care,
Thus Hymen, with aſſuming air,
Addreſs'd the God. Thou purblind chit,
Of aukward and ill-judging wit,
If matches are not better made,
At ncoe I muſt forſwear my trade.
You ſend me ſuch ill-coupled folks,
That 'tis a ſhame to ſell them yokes.
They ſquabble for a pin, a feather,
And wonder how they came together.
The husband's ſullen, dogged, ſhy,
The wife grows flippant in reply;
He loves command and due reſtriction,
And ſhe as well likes contradiction:
She never ſlaviſhly ſubmits;
She'll have her will, or have her fits.
He this way tugs, ſhe t'other draws;
The man grows jealous, and with cauſe.
Nothing can ſave him but divorce;
And here the wife complies of courſe.
When, ſays the Boy, had I to do
With either your affairs or you?
I never idly ſpent my darts;
You trade in mercenary hearts.
For ſettlements the lawyer's fee'd;
Is my hand witneſs to the deed?

If

If they like cat and dog agree,
Go rail at Plutus, not at me.
Plutus appear'd, and said, 'Tis true,
In marriage gold is all their view:
They seek not beauty, wit, or sense;
And love is seldom the pretence.
All offer incense at my shrine,
And I alone the bargain sign.
How can BELINDA blame her fate?
She only ask'd a great estate.
DORIS was rich enough, 'tis true;
Her lord must give her title too:
And ev'ry man, or rich or poor,
A fortune asks, and asks no more.
Av'rice, whatever shape it bears,
Must still be coupled with its cares.

FABLE XIII.

The TAME STAG.

AS a young Stag the thicket past,
The branches held his antlers fast;
A clown, who saw the captive hung,
Across the horns his halter flung.
Now safely hamper'd in the cord,
He bore the present to his lord.
His lord was pleas'd; as was the clown,
When he was tip'd with half a crown.
The Stag was brought before his wife;
The tender lady begg'd his life.
How sleek's the skin! how speck'd like ermine!
Sure never creature was so charming!
At first within the yard confin'd,
He flies and hides from all mankind;
Now bolder grown, with fix'd amaze,
And distant awe, presumes to gaze;
Munches the linen on the lines,
And on a hood or apron dines;

He ſteals my little maſter's bread,
Follows the ſervants to be fed:
Nearer and nearer now he ſtands,
To feel the praiſe of patting hands;
Examines ev'ry ſift for meat,
And though repuls'd, diſdains retreat;
Attacks again with levell'd horns;
And man, that was his terror, ſcorns.
Such is the country maiden's fright,
When firſt a red-coat is in ſight;
Behind the door ſhe hides her face;
Next time at diſtance eyes the lace.
She now can all his terrors ſtand,
Nor from his ſqueeze withdraws her hand.
She plays familiar in his arms,
And every ſoldier hath his charms.
From tent to tent ſhe ſpreads her flame;
For cuſtom conquers fear and ſhame.

FABLE XIV.

The MONKEY who had ſeen the world.

A Monkey, to reform the times,
Reſolv'd to viſit foreign climes;
For men in diſtant regions roam
To bring politer manners home.
So forth he fares, all toil defies:
Misfortune ſerves to make us wiſe.
At length the treach'rous ſnair was laid;
Poor Pug was caught, to town convey'd,
There ſold. (How envy'd was his doom,
Made captive in a lady's room!
Proud as a lover of his chains,
He day by day her favour gains.
Whene'er the duty of the day
The toilet calls; with mimic play
He twirls her knots, he cracks her fan,
Like any other Gentleman.

In

In visits too his parts and wit,
When jests grew dull, were sure to hit.
Proud with applause, he thought his mind
In ev'ry courtly art refin'd;
Like ORPHEUS burnt with public zeal,
To civilize the monkey weal:
So watch'd occasion, broke his chain,
And sought his native woods again.
The hairy sylvans round him press,
Astonish'd at his strut and dress.
Some praise his sleeve; and others glote
Upon his rich embroider'd coat;
His dapper perriwig commending,
With the black tail behind depending;
His powder'd back, above, below,
Like hoary frost, or fleecy snow;
But all, with envy and desire,
His flutt'ring shoulder-knot admire.
Hear and improve, he pertly cries;
I come to make a nation wise.
Weigh your own worth; support your place,
The next in rank to human race.
In cities long I pass'd my days,
Convers'd with men, and learn'd their ways.
Their dress, their courtly manners see;
Reform your state, and copy me.
Seek ye to thrive? in flatt'ry deal;
Your scorn, your hate, with that conceal.
Seem only to regard your friends,
But use them for your private ends.
Stint not to truth the flow of wit;
Be prompt to lie whene'er 'tis fit.
Bend all your force to spatter merit;
Scandal is conversation's spirit.
Boldly to ev'ry thing pretend,
And men your talents shall commend.
I knew the great. Observe me right;
So shall you grow like man polite.
He spoke, and bow'd. With mutt'ring jaws
The wond'ring circle grinn'd applause.

Now, warm'd with malice, envy, ſpite,
Their moſt obliging friends they bite;
And fond to copy human ways,
Practiſe new miſchiefs all their days.
Thus the dull lad, too tall for ſchool,
With travel finiſhes the fool;
Studious of ev'ry coxcomb's airs,
He drinks, games, dreſſes, whores, and ſwears;
O'erlooks with ſcorn all virtuous arts,
For vice is fitted to his parts.

FABLE XV.

The PHILOSOPHER and the PHEASANTS.

THE Sage, awak'd at early day
Through the deep foreſt took his way;
Drawn by the muſic of the groves,
Along the winding gloom he roves:
From tree to tree, the warbling throats
Prolong the ſweet alternate notes.
But where he paſt, he terror threw,
The ſong broke ſhort, the warblers flew;
The thruſhes chatter'd with affright,
And nightingales abhorr'd his ſight;
All animals before him ran,
To ſhun the hateful ſight of man.
Whence is this dread of ev'ry creature?
Fly they our figure, or our nature?
As thus he walk'd in muſing thought
His ear imperfect accents caught;
With cautious ſtep he nearer drew,
By the thick ſhade conceal'd from view.
High on the branch a Pheaſant ſtood,
Around her all the liſt'ning brood;
Proud of the bleſſings of her neſt,
She thus a mother's care expreſs'd.
No dangers here ſhall circumvent,
Within the woods enjoy content.
Sooner the hawk or vulture truſt,
Than man; of animals the worſt.

In him ingratitude you find,
A vice peculiar to the kind.
The ſheep, whoſe annual fleece is dy'd,
To guard his health, and ſerve his pride,
Forc'd from his fold and native plain,
Is in the cruel ſhambles ſlain.
The ſwarms, who, with induſtrious ſkill,
His hives with wax and honey fill,
In vain whole ſummer-days employ'd,
Their ſtores are ſold, their race deſtroy'd.
What tribute from the gooſe is paid!
Does not her wing all ſcience aid?
Does it not lovers hearts explain,
And drudge to raiſe the merchant's gain?
What now rewards this general uſe?
He takes the quills, and eats the gooſe.
Man then avoid, deteſt his ways;
So ſafety ſhall prolong your days.
When ſervices are thus acquitted,
Be ſure we Pheaſants muſt be ſpitted.

FABLE XVI.

The PIN and the NEEDLE.

A Pin, who long had ſerv'd a beauty,
Proficient in the toilet's duty,
Had form'd her ſleeve, confin'd her hair,
Or giv'n her knot a ſmarter air,
Now neareſt to her heart was plac'd,
Now in her mantua's tail diſgrac'd:
But could ſhe partial favour blame,
Who ſaw her lovers ſerv'd the ſame?
At length from all her honours caſt,
Through various turns of life ſhe paſt;
Now glitter'd on a taylor's arm,
Now kept a beggar's infant warm:
Now, rang'd within a miſer's coat,
Contributes to his yearly groat;
Now, rais'd again from low approach,
She viſits in the doctor's coach;

Here

Here, there, by various fortune toſt,
At laſt in Greſham-hall was loſt.
Charm'd with the wonders of the ſhow,
On ev'ry ſide, above, below,
She now of this or that enquires,
What leaſt was underſtood admires.
'Tis plain, each thing ſo ſtruck her mind,
Her head's of virtuoſo kind.
And pray what's this, and this, dear Sir?
A needle, ſays the interpreter.
She knew the name. And thus the fool
Addreſs'd her as a taylor's tool.
A Needle with that filthy ſtone,
Quite idle, all with ruſt o'ergrown!
You better might employ your parts,
And aid the ſempſtreſs in her arts.
But tell me how the friendſhip grew
Between that paltry flint and you?
Friend, ſays the Needle, ceaſe to blame;
I follow real worth and fame.
Know'ſt thou the loadſtone's pow'r and art,
That virtue virtues can impart?
Of all his talents I partake,
'Tis I direct the pilot's hand
To ſhun the rocks and treacherous ſand:
By me the diſtant world is known,
And either India is our own.
Had I with milliners been bred,
What had I been? the guide of thread,
And drudg'd as vulgar Needles do,
Of no more conſequence than you.

FABLE XVII.

The Shepherd's Dog and the Wolf.

A Wolf, with hunger fierce and bold,
Ravag'd the plains, and thinn'd the fold:
Deep in the wood ſecure he lay,
The theft of night regal'd the day.

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In vain the ſhepherd's wakeful care
Had ſpread the toils, and watch'd the ſnare;
In vain the dog purſu'd his pace,
The fleeter robber mock'd the chace.
As Lightfoot rang'd the foreſt round,
By chance his foe's retreat he found.
Let us a while the war ſuſpend,
And reaſon as from friend to friend.
A truce? replies the Wolf. 'Tis done.
The Dog the parley thus begun.
How can that ſtrong intrepid mind
Attack a weak defenceleſs kind?
Thoſe jaws ſhould prey on nobler food,
And drink the boar's and lion's blood.
Great ſouls with generous pity melt.
Which coward tyrants never felt.
How harmleſs is our fleecy care!
Be brave, and let thy mercy ſpare.
Friend, ſays the Wolf, the matter weigh;
Nature deſign'd us beaſts of prey;
As ſuch, when hunger finds a treat,
'Tis neceſſary Wolves ſhould eat.
If mindful of the bleating weal,
Thy boſom burn with real zeal;
Hence, and thy tyrant lord beſeech;
To him repeat the moving ſpeech:
A wolf eats ſheep but now and then,
Ten thouſands are devour'd by men.
An open foe may prove a curſe,
But a pretended friend is worſe.

FABLE XVIII.

The PAINTER who pleaſed nobody and every body.

LEST men ſuſpect your tale untrue,
Keep probability in view.
The trav'ler, leaping o'er thoſe bounds,
The credit of his book confounds.

Who with his tongue hath armies routed,
Makes ev'n his real courage doubted:
But flatt'ry never ſeems abſurd;
The flatter'd always take your word:
Impoſſibilities ſeem juſt;
They take the ſtrongeſt praiſe on truſt.
Hyperboles, tho' ne'er ſo great,
Will ſtill come ſhort of ſelf conceit.
So very like a Painter drew,
That ev'ry eye the picture knew;
He hit complexion, feature, air,
So juſt, the life itſelf was there.
No flatt'ry with his colours laid,
To bloom reſtor'd the faded maid;
He gave each muſcle all its ſtrength:
The mouth, the chin, the noſe's length.
His honeſt pencil touch'd with truth,
And mark'd the date of age and youth.
He loſt his friends, his practice fail'd;
Truth ſhould not alway be reveal'd;
In duſty piles his pictures lay,
For no one ſent the ſecond pay.
Two buſtos, fraught with ev'ry grace,
A VENUS' and APOLLO's face,
He plac'd in view; reſolv'd to pleaſe,
Whoever ſat, he drew from theſe,
From theſe corrected ev'ry feature,
And ſpirited each aukward creature.
All things were ſet; the hour was come,
His pallet ready o'er his thumb,
My Lord appear'd; and ſeated right
In proper attitude and light,
The painter look'd, he ſketch'd the piece,
Then dipp'd his pencil, talk'd of Greece,
Of TITIAN's tints, of GUIDO's air;
Thoſe eyes, my Lord, the ſpirit there
Might well a RAPHAEL's hand require,
To give them all the native fire;
The features fraught with ſenſe and wit,
You'll grant are very hard to hit;

But yet with patience you ſhall view
As much as paint and art can do.
Obſerve the work. My Lord reply'd,
'Till now I thought my mouth was wide;
Beſides, my noſe is ſomewhat long;
Dear Sir, for me, 'tis far too young.
Oh! pardon me, the artiſt cry'd,
In this, we painters muſt decide.
The piece ev'n common eyes muſt ſtrike,
I warrant it extremely like.
My Lord examin'd a-new;
No looking-glaſs ſeem'd half ſo true.
A lady came, with borrow'd grace
He from his VENUS form'd her face.
Her lover prais'd the Painter's art;
So like the picture in his heart!
To ev'ry age ſome charm he lent;
Ev'n Beauties were almoſt content.
Through all the town his art they prais'd;
His cuſtom grew, his price was rais'd.
Had he the real likeneſs ſhown,
Would any man the picture own?
But when thus happily he wrought,
Each found the likeneſs in his thought.

FABLE XIX.

The LION and the CUB.

HOW fond are men of rule and place,
Who court it from the mean and baſe!
Theſe cannot bear an equal nigh,
But from ſuperior merit fly.
They love the cellar's vulgar joke,
And loſe their hours in ale and ſmoke.
There o'er ſome petty club preſide;
So poor, ſo paltry is their pride!
Nay, e'en with fools whole night will ſit,
In hopes to be ſupreme in wit.
If theſe can read, to theſe I write,
To ſet their worth in trueſt light.

A Lion

A Lion-cub, of fordid mind,
Avoided all the lion kind;
Fond of applauſe, he ſought the feaſts
Of vulgar and ignoble beaſts;
With aſſes all his time he ſpent,
Their club's perpetual preſident.
He caught their manners, looks, and airs:
An aſs in every thing, but ears!
If e'er his highneſs meant a joke,
They grinn'd applauſe before he ſpoke;
But at each word what ſhouts of praiſe!
Good gods! how natural he brays!
Elate with flatt'ry and conceit,
He ſeeks his royal ſire's retreat;
Forward, and fond to ſhow his parts,
His Highneſs brays; the Lion ſtarts.
Puppy, that curs'd vociferation
Betrays thy life and converſation:
Coxcombs, an ever-noiſy race,
Are trumpets of their own diſgrace.
Why ſo ſevere? the Cub replies?
Our ſenate always held me wiſe.
How weak is pride! returns the ſire;
All fools are vain, when fools admire!
But know, what ſtupid aſſes prize,
Lions and noble beaſts deſpiſe.

FABLE XX.

The Old HEN and the Cock.

RESTRAIN your child; you'll ſoon believe
The text which ſays, we ſprung from EVE.
As an old Hen led forth her train,
And ſeem'd to peck to ſhew the grain;
She rak'd the chaff, ſhe ſcratch'd the ground,
And glean'd the ſpacious yard around.
A giddy chick, to try her wings,
On the well's narrow margin ſprings,

And prone she drops. The mother's breast
All day with sorrow was possess'd.
A Cock she met; her son she knew;
And in her heart affection grew.
My son, says she, I grant your years
Have reach'd beyond a Mother's cares.
I see you vig'rous, strong, and bold;
I hear with joy your triumphs told.
'Tis not from Cocks thy fate I dread;
But let thy ever-wary tread
Avoid yon well; that fatal place
Is sure perdition to our race.
Print this my counsel on thy breast;
To the just gods I leave the rest.
He thank'd her care; yet day by day
His bosom burn'd to disobey;
And ev'ry time the well he saw,
Scorn'd in his heart the foolish law;
Near and more near each day he drew,
And long'd to try the dang'rous view.
Why was this idle charge? he cries:
Let courage female fears despise.
Or did she doubt my heart was brave,
And therefore this injunction gave?
Or does her harvest store the place,
A treasure for her younger race;
And would she thus my search prevent?
I stand resolv'd, and dare th' event.
Thus said. He mounts the margin's round,
And pries into the depth profound.
He stretch'd his neck; and from below
With stretching neck advanc'd a foe:
With wrath his ruffled plumes he rears,
The foe with ruffled plumes appears:
Threat answer'd threat, his fury grew,
Headlong to meet the war he flew.
But when the wat'ry death he found,
He thus lamented as he drown'd.
I ne'er had been in this condition,
But for my mother's prohibition.

FABLE

FABLE XXI.

The RAT-CATCHER and CATS.

THE rats by night ſuch miſchief did,
BETTY was ev'ry morning chid.
They undermin'd whole ſides of bacon,
Her cheeſe was ſapp'd, her tarts were taken.
Her paſties, fenc'd with thickeſt paſte,
Were all demoliſh'd, and laid waſte.
She curs'd the Cat for want of duty,
Who left her foes a conſtant booty.
An Engineer, of noted ſkill,
Engag'd to ſtop the growing ill.
From room to room he now ſurveys
Their haunts, their works, their ſecret ways;
Finds where they 'ſcape an ambuſcade,
And whence the night'ly ſally's made.
An envious Cat from place to place,
Unſeen, attends his ſilent pace.
She ſaw, that, if his trade went on,
The purring race muſt be undone;
So, ſecretly removes his baits,
And ev'ry ſtratagem defeats.
Again he ſets the poiſon'd toils,
And Puſs again the labour foils.
What foe (to fruſtrate my deſigns)
My ſchemes thus nightly countermines?
Incens'd, he cries: this very hour
This wretch ſhall bleed beneath my power.
So ſaid. A pond'rous trap he brought,
And in the fact poor Puſs was caught.
Smuggler, ſays he, thou ſhalt be made
A victim to our loſs of trade.
The captive Cat, with piteous mews,
For pardon, life, and freedom ſues.
A ſiſter of the ſcience ſpare;
One int'reſt is our common care.
What inſolence! the man reply'd;
Shall Cats with us the game divide?

Were all your interloping band
Extinguish'd, or expell'd the land,
We Rat-catchers might raise our fees,
Sole guardians of a nation's cheese!
A Cat, who saw the lifted knife,
Thus spoke, and sav'd her sister's life.
In ev'ry age and clime we see,
Two of a trade can ne'er agree.
Each hates his neighbour for encroaching;
'Squire stigmatizes 'squire for poaching;
Beauties with beauties are in arms,
And scandal pelts each other's charms;
Kings too their neighbour kings dethrone,
In hope to make the world their own.
But let us limit our desires;
Nor war like beauties, kings, and 'squires;
For though we both one prey pursue,
There's game enough for us and you.

FABLE XXII.

The GOAT without a Beard.

'TIS certain, that the modish passions
Descend among the crowd like fashions
Excuse me then; if pride, conceit,
(The manners of the fair and great)
I give to monkeys, asses, dogs,
Fleas, owls, goats, butterflies, and hogs.
I say, that these are proud. What then?
I never said they equal men.
A Goat (as vain as Goat can be)
Affected singularity.
Where'er a thymy bank he found,
He roll'd upon the fragrant ground;
And then with fond attention stood,
Fix'd, o'er his image in the flood.
I hate my frowzy beard, he cries;
My youth is lost in this disguise.

Did

Did not the females know my vigour,
Well might they loath this rev'rend figure.
Reſolv'd to ſmooth his ſhaggy face,
He ſought the barber of the place.
A flippant monkey, ſpruce and ſmart,
Hard by, poſſeſs'd the dapper art,
His pole with pewter baſons hung,
Black rotten teeth in order ſtrung.
Rang'd cups, that in the window ſtood,
Lin'd with red rags, to look like blood,
Did well his threefold trade explain,
Who ſhav'd, drew teeth, and breath'd a vein.
The Goat he welcomes with an air,
And ſeats him in his wooden chair:
Mouth, noſe, and cheek the lather hides;
Light, ſmooth, and ſwift, the razor glides.
I hope your cuſtom, Sir, ſays pug.
Sure never face was half ſo ſmug.
The Goat, impatient for applauſe,
Swift to the neighb'ring hill withdraws;
The ſhaggy people grinn'd and ſtar'd.
Heighday! what's here? without a beard!
Say, brother, whence the dire diſgrace?
What envious hand hath robb'd your face?
When thus the fop with ſmiles of ſcorn:
Are beards by civil nations worn?
Ev'n Muſcovites have mow'd their chins.
Shall we, like formal Capuchins,
Stubborn in pride, retain the mode,
And bear about the hairy load?
Whene'er we through the village ſtray,
Are we not mock'd along the way;
Inſulted with loud ſhouts of ſcorn,
By boys our beards diſgrac'd and torn?
Were you no more with Goats to dwell,
Brother, I grant you rea'on well,
Replies a bearded chief. Beſide,
If boys can mortify thy pride,
How wilt thou ſtand the ridicule
Of our whole flock? affected fool!

Coxcombs, diſtinguiſh'd from the reſt,
To all but coxcombs are a jeſt.

FABLE XXIII.

The Old WOMAN and her CATS.

WHO friendſhip with a knave had made,
Is judg'd a partner in the trade.
The matron who conducts abroad
A willing nymph, is thought a bawd;
And if a modeſt girl is ſeen
With one who cures a lover's ſpleen,
We gueſs her, not extremely nice,
And only wiſh to know her price.
'Tis thus, that on the choice of friends
Our good or evil name depends.
A wrinkled Hag, of wicked fame,
Beſide a little ſmoaky flame
Sat hov'ring, pinch'd with age and froſt;
Her ſhrivell'd hands, with veins emboſs'd,
Upon her knees her weight ſuſtains,
While palſy ſhook her crazy brains:
She mumbles forth her backward pray'rs,
An untam'd ſco'd of fourſcore years.
About her ſwarm'd a num'rous brood
Of Cats, who lank with hunger mew'd.
Teaz'd with their cries, her choler grew,
And thus ſhe ſputter'd. Hence, ye crew.
Fool that I was, to entertain
Such imps, ſuch fiends, a helliſh train!
Had ye been never hous'd and nurs'd,
I, for a witch, had ne'er been curs'd.
To you I owe, that crowds of boys
Worry me with eternal noiſe;
Straws laid acroſs my pace retard,
The horſe-ſhoe's nail'd (each threſhold's guard)
The ſtunted broom the wenches hide,
For fear that I ſhould up and ride;

They

They ſtick with pins my bleeding ſeat,
And bid me ſhow my ſecret teat.
To hear you prate would vex a ſaint;
Who hath moſt reaſon of complaint?
Replies a Cat. Let's come to proof.
Had we ne'er ſtarv'd beneath your roof,
We had, like others of our race,
In credit liv'd as beaſts of chaſe.
'Tis infamy to ſerve a hag;
Cats are thought imps, her broom a nag;
And boys againſt our lives combine,
Becauſe, 'tis ſaid, your cats have nine.

FABLE XXIV.

The BUTTERFLY and the SNAIL.

ALL upſtarts inſolent in place,
Remind us of their vulgar race.
As, in the ſunſhine of the morn,
A Butterfly (but newly born)
Sat proudly perking on a roſe:
With pert conceit his boſom glows;
His wings (all-glorious to behold)
Bedropt with azure, jet and gold,
Wide he diſplays; the ſpangled dew
Reflects his eyes, and various hue.
His now-forgotten friend, a Snail,
Beneath his houſe, with ſlimy trail
Crawls o'er the graſs; whom when he ſpies,
In wrath he to the gard'ner cries:
What means yon peaſant's daily toil,
From choaking weeds to rid the ſoil?
Why wake you to the morning's care?
Why with new arts correct the year?
Why grows the peach with crimſon hue?
And why the plum's inviting blue?
Were they to feaſt his taſte deſign'd,
That vermin of voracious kind!

Cruſh

Crush then the slow, the pilf'ring race;
So purge thy garden from disgrace.
What arrogance! the Snail reply'd;
How insolent is upstart pride!
Hadst thou not thus with insult vain,
Provok'd my patience to complain,
I had conceal'd thy meaner birth,
Nor trac'd thee to the scum of earth.
For scarce nine suns have wak'd the hours,
To swell the fruit, and paint the flow'rs.
Since I thy humbler life survey'd,
In base and sordid guise array'd;
A hideous insect, vile, unclean,
You dragg'd a slow and noisome train;
And from your spider-bowels drew
Foul film, and spun the dirty clue.
I own my humble life, good friend;
Snail was I born, and Snail shall end.
And what's a Butterfly? At best,
He's but a caterpillar, drest;
And all thy race (a numerous seed)
Shall prove of caterpillar breed.

FABLE XXV.

The SCOLD and the PARROT.

THE husband thus reprov'd his wife:
Who deals in slander, lives in strife.
Art thou the herald of disgrace,
Denouncing war to all thy race?
Can nothing quell thy thunder's rage,
Which spares nor friend, nor sex, nor age?
That vixen tongue of your's, my dear,
Alarms our neighbours far and near.
Good Gods! 'tis like a rolling river,
That murm'ring flows, and flows for ever!
Ne'er tir'd, perpetual discord sowing!
Like fame, it gathers strength by going.
Heighday?

Heighday! the flippant tongue replies,
How ſolemn is the fool! how wiſe!
Is nature's choiceſt gift debarr'd?
Nay, frown not; for I will be heard.
Women of late are finely ridden,
A Parrot's privilege forbidden!
You praiſe his talk, his ſqualling ſong;
But wives are always in the wrong.
Now reputations flew in pieces
Of mothers, daughters, aunts, and nieces:
She ran the Parrot's language o'er,
Bawd, huſſy, drunkard, ſlattern, whore;
On all the ſex ſhe vents her fury,
Tries and condemns without a jury.
At once the torrent of her words
Alarm'd cat, monkey, dogs and birds:
All join their forces to confound her;
Puſs ſpits, the monkey chatters round her;
The yelping cur her heels aſſaults;
The magpye blabs out all her faults;
Poll, in the uproar, from his cage,
With this rebuke out-ſcream'd her rage.
A Parrot is for talking priz'd,
But prattling women are deſpis'd.
She who attacks another's honour,
Draws every living thing upon her.
Think, Madam, when you ſtretch your lungs,
That all your neighbours too have tongues;
One ſlander muſt ten thouſand get,
The world with int'reſt pays the debt.

FABLE XXVI.

The CUR and the MASTIFF.

A Sneaking Cur, the maſter's ſpy,
Rewarded for his daily lie,
With ſecret jealouſies and fears
Set all together by the ears.

Poor

Poor Puſs to-day was in diſgrace,
Another cat ſupply'd her place;
The hound was beat, the Maſtiff chid,
The monkey was the room forbid;
Each to his deareſt friend grew ſhy,
And none could tell the reaſon why.
A plan to rob the houſe was laid.
The thief with love ſeduc'd the maid;
Cajol'd the Cur, and ſtrok'd his head,
And bought his ſecrecy with bread.
He next the maſtiff's honour try'd,
Whoſe honeſt jaws the bribe defy'd:
He ſtretch'd his hand to proffer more;
The ſurly Dog his fingers tore.
Swift ran the Cur; with indignation
The maſter took his information,
Hang him, the villain's curſe he cries;
And round his neck the halter ties.
The Dog his humble ſuit preferr'd,
And begg'd in juſtice to be heard.
The maſter ſat. On either hand
The cited dogs confronting ſtand;
The Cur the bloody tale relates,
And, like a lawyer, aggravates.
Judge not unheard, the Maſtiff cry'd,
But weigh the cauſe of either ſide.
Think not that treach'ry can be juſt,
Take not informers words on truſt.
They ope their hand to ev'ry pay,
And you and me by turn betray.
He ſpoke. And all the truth appear'd.
The Cur was hang'd, the maſtiff clear'd.

FABLE XXVII.

The SICK MAN and the ANGEL.

IS there no hope? the ſick man ſaid.
The ſilent doctor ſhook his head,
And took his leave with ſigns of ſorrow,
Deſpairing of his fee to-morrow.

When thus the Man, with gaſping breath;
I feel the chilling wound of death:
Since I muſt bid the world adieu,
Let me my former life review.
I grant, my bargains well were made,
But all men over-reach in trade;
'Tis ſelf-defence in each profeſſion.
Sure ſelf-defence is no tranſgreſſion.
The little portion in my hands,
By good ſecurity on lands,
Is well increas'd. If unawares,
My juſtice to myſelf and heirs,
Hath let my debtor rot in jail,
For want of good ſufficient bail;
If I by writ, or bond, or deed,
Reduc'd a family to need,
My will hath made the world amends;
My hope on charity depends.
When I am number'd with the dead,
And all my pious gifts are read,
By heav'n and earth 'twill then be known,
My charities were amply ſhown.
An Angel came. Ah friend! he cry'd,
No more in flatt'ring hope confide.
Can thy good deeds in former times
Outweigh the balance of thy crimes?
What widow or what orphan prays
To crown thy life with length of days?
A pious action's in thy power,
Embrace with joy the happy hour.
Now, while you draw the vital air,
Prove your intention is ſincere.
This inſtant give a hundred pound;
Your neighbours want, and you abound.
But why ſuch haſte! the ſick man whines;
Who knows as yet what heav'n deſigns?
Perhaps I may recover ſtill.
That ſum and more are in my will.
Fool, ſays the Viſian, now 'tis plain,
Your life, your ſoul, your heav'n was gain.

From

From ev'ry side, with all your might,
You scrap'd, and scrap'd beyond your right;
And after death would fain atone,
By giving what is not your own.
While there is life, there's hope, he cry'd;
Then why such haste? so groan'd and dy'd.

FABLE XXVIII.

The PERSIAN, the SUN, and the CLOUD.

IS there a bard whom genius fires,
Whose ev'ry thought the God inspires?
When envy reads the nervous lines,
She frets, she rails, she raves, she pines;
Her hissing snakes with venom swell;
She calls her venal train from hell:
The servile fiends her nod obey,
And all CURL's authors are in pay.
Fame calls up calumny and spite.
Thus shadow owes its birth to light.
As prostrate to the God of day,
With heart devout, a Persian lay,
His invocation thus begun.
Parent of light, all-seeing Sun,
Prolific beam, whose rays dispense
The various gifts of providence,
Accept our praise, our daily prayer,
Smile on our fields, and bless the year.
A Cloud, who mock'd his grateful tongue,
The day with sudden darkness hung,
With pride and envy swell'd, aloud
A voice thus thunder'd from the cloud.
Weak is this gaudy God of thine,
Whom I at will forbid to shine.
Shall I nor vows, nor incense know;
Where praise is due, the praise bestow.
With fervent zeal the Persian mov'd,
Thus the proud calumny reprov'd.
It was that God, who claims my prayer,
Who gave thee birth, and rais'd thee there;

When o'er his beams the veil is thrown,
Thy ſubſtance is but plainer ſhown.
A paſſing gale, a puff of wind
Diſpels thy thickeſt troops combin'd.
The gale aroſe; the vapour toſt
(The ſport of winds) in air was loſt;
The glorious orb the day refines.
Thus envy breaks, thus merit ſhine.

FABLE XXIX.

The Fox at the point of death.

A Fox, in life's extreme decay,
Weak, ſick, and faint, expiring lay;
All appetite had left his maw,
And age diſarm'd his mumbling jaw.
His num'rous race around him ſtand
To learn their dying ſire's command;
He rais'd his head with whining moan,
And thus was heard the feeble tone.
Ah, ſons! from evil ways depart:
My crimes lie heavy on my heart.
See, ſee, the murder'd geeſe appear!
Why are thoſe bleeding turkies there?
Why all around this cackling train,
Who haunt my ears for chicken ſlain?
The hungry Foxes round them ſtar'd,
And for the promis'd feaſt prepar'd.
Where, Sir, is all this dainty cheer?
Nor turkey, gooſe, nor hen is here.
Theſe are the phantoms of your brain,
And your ſons lick their lips in vain.
O gluttons! ſays the drooping ſire,
Reſtrain inordinate deſire.
Your liqu'riſh taſte you ſhall deplore,
When peace of conſcience is no more.
Does not the hound betray our pace,
And gins and guns deſtroy our race?

Thieves

Thieves dread the ſearching eye of pow'r,
And never feel the quiet hour.
Old age (which few of us ſhall know)
Now puts a period to my woe.
Would you true happineſs attain,
Let honeſty your paſſions rein;
So live in credit and eſteem,
And the good name you loſt, redeem.
The counſel's good, a Fox replies,
Could we perform what you adviſe.
Think what our anceſtors have done;
A line of thieves from ſon to ſon:
To us deſcends the long diſgrace,
And infamy hath mark'd our race.
Though we, like harmleſs ſheep, ſhould feed,
Honeſt in thought, in word, and deed;
Whatever hen-rooſt is decreas'd,
We ſhall be thought to ſhare the feaſt.
The change ſhall never be believ'd.
A loſt good name is ne'er retriev'd.
Nay, then, replies the feeble Fox,
(But hark! I hear a hen that clocks)
Go, but be mod'rate in your food;
A Chicken too might do me good.

FABLE XXX.

The SETTING-DOG and the PARTRIDGE.

THE ranging Dog the ſtubble tries,
And ſearches ev'ry breeze that flies;
The ſcent grows warm; with cautious fear
He creeps, and points the covey near;
The men, in ſilence, far behind,
Conſcious of game, the net unbind.
A Partridge, with experience wiſe,
The fraudful preparation ſpies:
She mocks their toils, alarms her brood;
The covey ſprings, and ſeeks the wood;

But

But ere her certain wing she tries,
Thus to the creeping spaniel cries.
Thou fawning slave to man's deceit,
Thou pimp of luxury, sneaking cheat,
Of thy whole species thou disgrace,
Dogs should disown thee of their race!
For if I judge their native parts,
They're born with open honest hearts;
And, ere they serv'd man's wicked ends,
Were gen'rous foes, or real friends.
When thus the Dog with scornful smile:
Secure of wing, thou dar'st revile.
Clowns are to polish'd manners blind;
How ign'rant is the rustick mind!
My worth sagacious courtiers see,
And to preferment rise, like me.
The thriving pimp, who beauty sets,
Hath oft' enhanc'd a nation's debts:
Friend sets his friend, without regard;
And ministers his skill reward:
Thus train'd by man, I learnt his ways,
And growing favour feasts my days.
I might have gues's'd, the Partridge said,
The place where you were train'd and fed;
Servants are apt, and in a trice
Ape to a hair their master's vice.
You came from court, you say. Adieu,
She said, and to the covey flew.

FABLE XXXI.

The Universal Apparition.

A Rake, by ev'ry passion rul'd,
With ev'ry vice his youth had cool'd;
Disease his tainted blood assails;
His spirits droop, his vigour fails;
With secret ills at home he pines,
And, like infirm old age, declines.
As, twing'd with pain, he pensive sits,
And raves, and prays, and swears by fits;

A ghastly

A ghaſtly phantom, lean and wan,
Before him roſe, and thus began.
My name, perhaps, hath reach'd your ear;
Attend, and be adviſ'd by Care.
Nor love, nor honour, wealth, nor pow'r,
Can give the heart a chearful hour,
When health is loſt. Be timely wiſe:
With health all taſte of pleaſure flies.
Thus ſaid, the phantom diſappears.
The wary counſel wak'd his fears:
He now from all exceſs abſtains,
With phyſick purifies his veins;
And, to procure a ſober life,
Reſolves to venture on a wife.
But now again the Sprite aſcends,
Where'er he walks his ear attends;
Inſinuates that beauty's frail,
That perſeverance muſt prevail;
With jealouſies his brain inflames,
And whiſpers all her lovers names.
In other hours ſhe repreſents
His houſhold charge, his annual rents,
Increaſing debts, perplexing duns,
And nothing for his younger ſons.
Strait all his thought to gain he turns,
And with the thirſt of lucre burns.
But when poſſeſs'd of fortune's ſtore,
The Spectre haunts him more and more;
Sets want and miſery in view,
Bold thieves, and all the murd'ring crew;
Alarms him with eternal frights,
Infeſts his dream, or wakes his nights.
How ſhall he chaſe this hideous gueſt?
Pow'r may perhaps protect his reſt.
To pow'r he roſe. Again the Sprite
Beſets him morning, noon and night.
Talks of Ambition's tott'ring ſeat,
How Envy perſecutes the great,
Of rival hate, of treach'rous friends,
And what diſgrace his fall attends.

The

The court he quits to fly from Care,
And ſeeks the peace of rural air:
His groves, his fields, amus'd his hours;
He prun'd his trees, he rais'd his flowers.
But Care again his ſteps purſues;
Warns him of blaſts, of blighting dews,
Of plund'ring inſects, ſnails and rains,
And droughts that ſtarv'd the labour'd plains.
Abroad, at home, the Spectre's there:
In vain we ſeek to fly from Care.
At length he thus the Ghoſt addreſt,
Since thou muſt be my conſtant gueſt,
Be kind, and follow me no more;
For Care by right ſhould go before.

FABLE XXXII.

The two OWLS and the SPARROW.

TWO formal Owls together ſat,
Conferring thus in ſolemn chat.
How is the modern taſte decay'd!
Where's the reſpect to wiſdom paid?
Our worth the Grecian ſages knew;
They gave our ſires the honour due;
They weigh'd the dignity of fowls,
And pry'd into the depth of Owls.
Athens, the ſeat of learned fame,
With gen'ral voice rever'd our name;
On merit title was confer'd,
And all ador'd th' Athenian bird.
Brother, you reaſon well, replies
The ſolemn mate, with half-ſhut eyes;
Right. Athens was the ſeat of learning,
And truly wiſdom is diſcerning.
Beſides, on Pallas' helm we ſit,
The type and ornament of wit:
But now, alas! we're quite neglected,
And a pert Sparrow's more reſpected.

A ſpar-

A Sparrow, who was lodg'd beſide,
O'erhears them ſooth each other's pride,
And thus he nimbly vents his heat.
Who meets a fool muſt find conceit.
I grant, you were at Athens grac'd,
And on Minerva's helm were plac'd;
But ev'ry bird that wings the ſky,
Except an Owl, can tell you why.
From hence they taught their ſchools to know
How falſe we judge by outward ſhow;
That we ſhould never looks eſteem,
Since fools as wiſe as you might ſeem.
Would you contempt and ſcorn avoid,
Let your vain-glory be deſtroy'd:
Humble your arrogance of thought,
Purſue the ways by nature taught;
So ſhall you find delicious fare,
And grateful farmers praiſe your care;
So ſhall ſleek mice your chace reward,
And no keen cat find more regard.

FABLE XXXIII.

The COURTIER and PROTEUS.

WHene'er a courtier's out of place,
The country ſhelters his diſgrace;
Where, doom'd to exerciſe and health,
His houſe and gardens own his wealth.
He builds new ſchemes, in hope to gain
The plunder of another reign;
Like PHILIP's ſon, would fain be doing,
And ſighs for other realms to ruin.
As one of theſe (without his wand)
Penſive along the winding ſtrand
Employ'd the ſolitary hour,
In projects to regain his pow'r;
The waves in ſpreading circles ran,
Proteus aroſe, and thus began.

Came

Came you from Court! For in your mien
A self-important air is seen.
He frankly own'd his friends had trick'd him,
And how he fell his party's victim.
Know, says the God, by matchless skill
I change to ev'ry shape at will
But yet, I'm told, at court you see
Those who presume to rival me.
Thus said. A snake, with hideous trail,
Proteus extends his scaly mail.
Know, says the Man, though proud in place,
All courtiers are of reptile race.
Like your, they take that dreadful form,
Bask in the sun, and fly the storm;
With malice his, with envy glote,
And for convenience change their coat;
With new-got lustre rear their head,
Though on a dunghill born and bred.
Sudden the God a lion stands;
He shakes his mane, he spurns the sands;
Now a fierce lynx, with fiery glare,
A wolf, an ass, a fox, a bear.
Had I ne'er liv'd at court, he cries,
Such transformation might surprise;
But there, in quest of daily game,
Each abler courtier acts the same.
Wolves, lions, lynxes, while in place,
Their friends and fellows are their chase.
They play the bear's and fox's part;
Now rob by force, now steal with art.
They sometimes in the senate bray;
Or, chang'd again to beasts of prey,
Down from the lion to the ape,
Practise the frauds of ev'ry shape.
So said. Upon the God he flies,
In cords the struggling captive ties:
Now, Proteus, now (to truth compell'd)
Speak, and confess thy art excell'd.
Use strength, surprize, or what you will,
The courtier finds evasions still:

Not to be bound by any ties,
And never forc'd to leave his lies.

FABLE XXXIV.

The MASTIFFS.

THOSE who in quarrels interpoſe,
Muſt often wipe a bloody noſe.
A Maſtiff, of true Engliſh blood,
Lov'd fighting better than his food.
When dogs were ſnarling for a bone,
He long'd to make the war his own,
And often found (when to contend)
To interpoſe obtain'd his end;
He glory'd in his limping pace;
The ſcars of honour ſeam'd his face;
In ev'ry limb a gaſh appears,
And frequent fights retrench'd his ears.
As, on a time, he heard from far
Two dog's engag'd in noiſy war,
Away he ſcours and lays about him,
Reſolv'd no fray ſhould be without him.
Forth from his yard a tanner flies,
And to the bold intruder cries,
A cudgel ſhall correct your manners.
Whence ſprung this curſed hate to tanners?
While on my dog you vent your ſpite,
Sirrah! 'tis me you dare not bite.
'To ſee the battle thus perplex'd,
With equal rage the butcher vex'd,
Hoarſe-ſcreaming from the circled crowd,
To the curs'd Maſtiff cries aloud.
Both Hockley-hole and Mary-bone
The combats of my Dog have known.
He ne'er, like bullies coward-hearted,
Attacks in public, to be parted.
Think not, raſh fool, to ſhare his fame;
Be his the honour or the ſhame.

Thus ſaid, they ſwore, and rav'd like thunder;
Then dragg'd their faſten'd dogs aſunder;
While clubs and kicks from ev'ry ſide
Rebounded from the Maſtiff's hide.
All reeking now with ſweat and blood,
A while the parted warriers ſtood,
Then pour'd upon the meddling foe;
Who, worried, howl'd and ſprawl'd below.
He roſe; and limping from the fray,
By both ſides mangled, ſneak'd away.

FABLE XXXV.

The BARLEY-MOW and the DUNGHILL.

HOW many ſaucy airs we meet
From Temple-bar to Aldgate-ſtreet?
Proud rogues, who ſhar'd the South-ſea prey,
And ſprung like muſhrooms in a day!
They think it mean, to condeſcend
To know a brother or a friend;
They bluſh to hear their mother's name,
And by their pride expoſe their ſhame.
As croſs his yard, at early day,
A careful farmer took his way,
He ſtop'd, and leaning on his fork,
Obſerv'd the flail's inceſſant work.
In thought he meaſur'd all his ſtore,
His geeſe, his hogs, he number'd o'er;
In fancy weigh'd the fleeces ſhorn,
And multiply'd the next year's corn.
A Barley-mow, which ſtood beſide,
Thus to its muſing maſter cry'd,
Say, good Sir, is it fit or right
To treat me with neglect and ſlight?
Me, who contribute to your chear,
And raiſe your mirth with ale and beer?
Why thus inſulted, thus diſgrac'd,
And that vile Dunghill near me plac'd?

Are thoſe poor ſweepings of a groom,
That filthy ſight, that nauſeous fume,
Meet objects here? Command it hence:
A thing ſo mean muſt give offence.
The humble Dunghill thus reply'd.
Thy maſter hears, and mocks thy pride:
Inſult not thus the meek and low;
In me thy benefactor know;
My warm aſſiſtance gave thee birth,
Or thou hadſt periſh'd low in earth;
But upſtarts, to ſupport their ſtation,
Cancel at once all obligation.

FABLE XXXVI.

PYTHAGORAS and the COUNTRYMAN.

PYTHAG'RAS roſe at early dawn,
By ſoaring meditation drawn,
To breathe the fragrance of the day,
Through flow'ry fields he took his way.
In muſing contemplation warm,
His ſteps miſled him to a farm,
Where on the ladder's topmoſt round,
A peaſant ſtood; the hammer's ſound
Shook the weak barn. Say, friend, what care
Calls for thy honeſt labour there?
The Clown, with ſurly voice replies,
Vengeance aloud for juſtice cries.
This kite, by daily rapine fed,
My hens annoy, my turkeys dread;
At length his forfeit life hath paid;
See on the wall his wings diſplay'd,
Here nail'd, a terror to his kind,
My fowls ſhall future ſafety find;
My yard the thriving poultry feed,
And my barn's refuſe fat the breed.
Friend, ſays the ſage, the doom is wiſe;
For public good the murd'rer dies.

But

But if theſe tyrants of the air
Demand a ſentence ſo ſevere,
Think how the glutton, man, devours;
What bloody feaſts regale his hours!
O impudence of power and might,
Thus to condemn a hawk or kite,
When thou perhaps, carniv'rous finner,
Hadſt pullets yeſterday for dinner!
Hold, cry'd the Clown, with paſſion heated,
Shall kites and men alike be treated?
When heav'n the world with creatures ſtor'd
Man was ordain'd their ſov'reign lord.
Thus tyrants boaſt, the ſage reply'd,
Whoſe murders ſpring from power and pride.
Own then this manlike kite is ſlain
Thy greater lux'ry to ſuſtain;
For "Petty rouges ſubmit to fate,
"That great ones may enjoy their ſtate."

FABLE XXXVII.

The FARMER'S WIFE and the RAVEN.

WHY are thoſe tears? why droops your head?
Is then your other huſband dead?
Or does a worſe diſgrace betide?
Hath no one ſince his death apply'd?
Alas! you know the cauſe too well:
The ſalt is ſpilt, to me it fell.
Then to contribute to my loſs,
My knife and fork were laid acroſs;
On Friday too! the day I dread!
Would I were ſafe at home in bed!
Laſt night (I vow to heav'n 'tis true)
Bounce from the fire a coffin flew.
Next poſt ſome fatal news ſhall tell.
God ſend my Corniſh friends be well!

Unhappy widow, ceaſe thy tears,
Nor feel affliction in thy fears.
Let not thy ſtomach be ſuſpended;
Eat now, and weep when dinner's ended;
And when the butler clears the table,
For thy deſert, I'll read my fable.
Betwixt her ſwagging panner's load
A farmer's wife to market road,
And, jogging on, with thoughtful care
Summ'd up the profits of her ware;
When, ſtarting from her ſilver dream,
Thus far and wide were heard her ſcream.
That raven on yon left-hand oak
(Curſe on his ill-betiding croak)
Bodes me no good. No more ſhe ſaid,
When poor blind Ball, with ſtumbling tread,
Fell prone; o'erturn'd the pannier lay,
And her maſh'd eggs beſtrow'd the way.
She, ſprawling in the yellow road,
Rail'd, ſwore and curs'd. Thou croaking toad,
A murrain take thy whoreſon throat!
I knew misfortune in the note.
Dame, quoth the raven, ſpare your oaths,
Unclench your fiſt, and wipe your cloaths.
But why on me thoſe curſes thrown?
Goody, the fault was all your own;
For had you laid this brittle ware,
On Dun, the old ſure-footed mare,
Though all the Ravens of the hundred,
With croaking had your tongue out-thunder'd,
Sure-footed Dun had kept his legs,
And you, good woman, ſav'd your eggs.

FABLE XXXVIII.

The TURKEY and the ANT.

IN other men we faults can ſpy,
And blame the moat that dims their eye,
Each little ſpeck and blemiſh find,
To our own ſtronger errors blind.

A Turkey, tir'd of common food,
Forſook the barn, and ſought the wood;
Behind her ran an infant train,
Collecting here and there a grain.
Draw near, my birds, the mother cries,
This hill delicious fare ſupplies;
Behold, the buſy Negroe race,
See, millions blacken all the place!
Fear not. Like me with freedom eat;
An Ant is moſt delightful meat.
How bleſs'd, how envy'd were our life,
Could we but 'ſcape the poult'rer's knife!
But man, curs'd man, on turkeys preys,
And Chriſtmas ſhortens all our days:
Sometimes with oyſters we combine,
Sometimes aſſiſt the ſav'ry chine.
From the low peaſant to the lord,
The Turkey ſmoaks on ev'ry board.
Sure men for gluttony are curs'd,
Of the ſev'n deadly ſins the worſt.
An Ant, who climb'd beyond his reach,
Thus anſwer'd from the neighb'ring beech.
Ere you remark another's ſin,
Bid thy own conſcience look within;
Controul thy more voracious bill,
Nor for a breakfaſt nations kill.

FABLE XXXIX.

The FATHER and JUPITER.

THE Man to JOVE his ſuit preferr'd;
He begg'd a wife. His prayer was heard.
Jove wonder'd at his bold addreſſing:
For how precarious is the bleſſing!
A wife he takes. And now for heirs
Again he worries heav'n with prayers.
Jove nods aſſent. Two hopeful boys
And a fine girl reward his joys.

Now, more ſolicitous he grew,
And ſet their future lives in view;
He ſaw that all reſpect and duty
Were paid to wealth, to power, and beauty.
Once more, he cries, accept my prayer;
Make my lov'd progeny thy care.
Let my firſt hope, my fav'rite boy,
All fortune's richeſt gifts enjoy.
My next with ſtrong ambition fire:
May favour teach him to aſpire;
Till he the ſtep of pow'r aſcend,
And courtiers to their idol bend.
With ev'ry grace, with ev'ry charm,
My daughter's perfect features arm.
If Heav'n approve, a Father's bleſs'd.
Jove ſmiles, and grants his full requeſt.
The firſt, a miſer at the heart,
Studious of ev'ry griping art,
Heaps hoards on hoards with anxious pain,
And all his life devotes to gain.
He feels no joy, his cares increaſe,
He neither wakes nor ſleeps in peace;
In fancy's want (a wretch compleat)
He ſtarves, and yet he dares not eat.
The next to ſudden honours grew:
The thriving art of courts he knew:
He reach'd the height of power and place;
Then fell, the victim of diſgrace.
Beauty with early bloom ſupplies
His daughter's cheek, and points her eyes.
The vain coquette each ſuit diſdains,
And glories in her lover's pains.
With age ſhe fades, each lover flies,
Contemn'd, forlorn, ſhe pines and dies.
When Jove the Father's grief ſurvey'd,
And heard him Heav'n and Fate upbraid,
Thus ſpoke the God. By outward ſhow,
Men judge of happineſs and woe:
Shall ignorance of good and ill
Dare to direct th' eternal will?

Seek

Seek virtue; and of that poſſeſt,
To Providence reſign the reſt.

FABLE XL.

The TWO MONKIES.

THE learn'd, full of inward pride,
The Fops of outward ſhow deride;
The Fop, with learning at defiance,
Scoffs at the pedant, and the ſcience:
The Don, a formal, ſolemn ſtrutter,
Deſpiſes Monſieur's airs and flutter;
While Monſieur mocks the formal fool,
Who looks, and ſpeaks, and walks by rule.
Britain, a medley of the twain,
As pert as France, as grave as Spain;
In fancy wiſer than the reſt,
Laughs at them both, of both the jeſt.
Is not the poet's chiming cloſe
Cenſur'd by all the ſons of proſe?
While bards of quick imagination
Deſpiſe the ſleepy proſe narration.
Men laugh at Apes, they men contemn;
For what are we, but Apes to them?

Two Monkeys went to Southwark fair,
No critics had a ſourer air:
They foro'd their way through draggled folks,
Who gap'd to catch Jack-pudding's jokes;
Then took their tickets for the ſhow.
And got by chance the foremoſt row.
To ſee their grave, obſerving face,
Provok'd a laugh through all the place.
Brother, ſays Pug, and turn'd his head,
The rabble's monſtrouſly ill bred.
Now through the booth loud hiſſes ran;
Nor ended till the ſhow began.

The tumbler whirls the flip-flap round,
With somersets he shakes the ground;
The cord beneath the dancer springs;
Aloft in air the vaulter swings;
Distorted now, now prone depends,
Now through his twisted arms ascends:
The crowd, in wonder and delight,
With clapping hands applaud the sight.
With smiles, quoth Pug, If pranks like these
The giant Apes of reason please,
How would they wonder at our arts;
They must adore us for our parts.
High on the twig I've seen you cling;
Play, twist and turn in airy ring:
How can those clumsy things, like me,
Fly with a bound from tree to tree?
But yet, by this applause, we find
These emulators of our kind
Discern our worth, our parts regard,
Who our mean mimics thus reward.
Brother, the grinning mate replies,
In this I grant that Man is wise.
While good example they pursue,
We must allow some praise is due;
But when they stray beyond their guide,
I laugh to scorn the mimic pride.
For how fantastic is the sight,
To meet men always bolt upright,
Because we sometimes walk on two!
I hate the imitating crew.

FABLE XLI.

The OWL and the FARMER.

AN Owl of grave deport and mien,
Who (like the Turk) was seldom seen,
Within a barn had chose his station,
As fit for prey and contemplation.

Upon

Upon a beam aloft he ſits,
And nods, and ſeems to think, by fits.
So have I ſeen a man of news,
Or Poſt-boy, or Gazette peruſe;
Smoke, nod, and talk with voice profound,
And fix the fate of Europe round.
Sheaves pil'd on ſheaves hid all the floor.
At dawn of morn, to view his ſtore
The Farmer came. The hooting gueſt
His ſelf-importance thus expreſt.
Reaſon in man is mere pretence:
How weak, how ſhallow is his ſenſe!
To treat with ſcorn the Bird of night,
Declares his folly, or his ſpite.
Then too, how partial is his praiſe!
The lark's, the linnet's chirping lays
To his ill-judging ears are fine;
And nightingales are all divine.
But the more knowing feather'd race
See wiſdom ſhap'd upon my face.
When'er to viſit light I deign,
What flocks of fowl compoſe my train!
Like ſlaves, they crowd my flight behind,
And own me of ſuperior kind.
The Farmer laugh'd, and thus reply'd:
Thou dull important lump of pride,
Dar'ſt thou with that harſh grating tongue
Depreciate birds of warbling ſong?
Indulge thy ſpleen. Know, men and fowl
Regard thee, as thou art, an Owl.
Beſides, proud Blockhead, be not vain
Of what thou call'ſt thy ſlaves and train.
Few follow wiſdom or her rules;
Fools in deriſion follow fools.

FABLE XLII.

The JUGGLERS.

A Juggler long through all the town
Had rais'd his fortune and renown;

You'd think (ſo far his art tranſcends)
The Devil at his fingers ends.
Vice heard his fame, ſhe read his bill;
Convinc'd of his inferior ſkill,
She ſought his booth, and from the crowd
Defy'd the man of art aloud.
Is this then he ſo fam'd for ſlight?
Can this ſlow bungler cheat your ſight?
Dares he with me diſpute the prize?
I leave it to impartial eyes.
Provok'd, the Juggler cry'd, 'Tis done.
In ſcience I ſubmit to none.
Thus ſaid. The cups and balls he play'd;
By turns, this here, that there, convey'd.
The cards, obedient to his words,
Are by a fillip turn'd to birds.
His little boxes change the grain:
Trick after trick deludes the train.
He ſhakes his bag, he ſhews all fair;
His fingers ſpread, and nothing there;
Then bids it rain with ſhowers of gold,
And now his iv'ry eggs are told.
But when from thence the hen he draws,
Amaz'd ſpectators hum applauſe.
Vice now ſtept forth, and took the place
With all the forms of this grimace.
This magic looking-glaſs, ſhe cries,
(There, hand it round) will charm your eyes.
Each eager eye the ſight defir'd,
And ev'ry man himſelf admir'd.
Next, to a ſenator addreſſing;
See this bank-note; obſerve the bleſſing.
Breathe on the Bill. Heigh, paſs! 'Tis gone.
Upon his lips a padlock ſhown.
A ſecond puff the magic broke;
The padlock vaniſh'd, and he ſpoke.
Twelve bottles rang'd upon the board,
And full, with heady liquor ſtor'd,
By clean conveyance diſappear,
And now two bloody ſwords are there.

A purſe

A purſe ſhe to a thief expos'd;
At once his ready fingers clos'd.
He opes his fiſt, the treaſure's fled;
He ſees a halter in its ſtead.
She bids ambition hold a wand;
He graſps a hatchet in his hand.
A Box of charity ſhe ſhows.
Blow here; and a church-warden blows.
'Tis vaniſh'd with conveyance neat,
And on the table ſmokes a treat.
She ſhakes the dice, the board ſhe knocks,
And from all pockets fills her box.
She next a meagre rake addreſt.
This picture ſee; her ſhape, her breaſt!
What youth, and what enviting eyes!
Hold her, and have her. With ſurpriſe,
His hand expos'd a box of pills,
And a loud laugh proclaim'd his ills.
A counter, in a miſer's hand,
Grew twenty guineas at command.
She bids his heir the ſum retain,
And 'tis a counter now again.
A guinea with her touch you ſee
Take ev'ry ſhape, but Charity,
And not one thing you ſaw, or drew,
But chang'd from what was firſt in view.
The Juggler now in grief of heart,
With this ſubmiſſion own'd her art.
Can I ſuch matchleſs ſlight withſtand!
How practice hath improv'd your hand!
But now and then I cheat the throng;
You ev'ry day, and all day long.

FABLE XLIII.

The COUNCIL of HORSES.

UPON a time a neighing ſteed,
Who gaz'd among a num'rous breed,

With

With mutiny had fir'd the train,
And ſpread diſſention through the plain.
On matters that concern'd the ſtate
The council met in grand debate.
A colt, whoſe eye-balls flam'd with ire,
Elate with ſtrength and youthful fire,
In haſte ſtept forth before the reſt,
And thus the liſt'ning throng addreſt.
Good gods! how abject is our race,
Condemn'd to ſlav'ry and diſgrace!
Shall we our ſervitude retain,
Becauſe our ſires have borne the chain?
Conſider, friends, your ſtrength and might;
'Tis conqueſt to aſſert your right.
How cumbrous is the gilded coach,
The pride of man is our reproach.
Were we deſign'd for daily toil,
To drag the plough-ſhare through the ſoil;
To ſweat in harneſs through the road,
To groan beneath the carrier's load?
How feeble are the two-legg'd kind!
What force is in our nerves combin'd!
Shall then our nobler jaws ſubmit
To foam and champ the galling bit?
Shall haughty man my back beſtride?
Shall the ſharp ſpur provoke my ſide?
Forbid it heav'ns! Reject the reign;
Your ſhame, your infamy diſdain.
Let him the lion firſt controul,
And ſtill the tyger's famiſh'd growl.
Let us, like them, our freedom claim,
And make them tremble at our name.
A general nod approv'd the cauſe,
And all the circle neigh'd applauſe.
When, lo! with grave and ſolemn pace,
A Steed advanc'd before the race,
With age and long experience wiſe;
Around he caſt his thoughtful eyes,
And, to the murmurs of his train,
Thus ſpoke the Neſtor of the plain.

When

When I had health and ſtrength, like you,
The toils of ſervitude I knew.
Now grateful man rewards my pains,
And gives me all theſe wide domains.
At will I crop the year's increaſe;
My latter life is reſt and peace.
I grant to man we lend our pains,
And aid him to correct the plains.
But doth not he divide the care,
Through all the labours of the year?
How many thouſand ſtructures riſe,
To fence us from inclement ſkies!
For us he bears the ſultry day,
And ſtores up all our winter's hay.
He ſows, he reaps the harveſt's gain;
We ſhare the toil, and ſhare the grain.
Since ev'ry creature was decreed
To aid each other's mutual need,
Appeaſe your diſcontented mind,
And act the part by heav'n aſſign'd.
The tumult ceas'd. The coalt ſubmitted,
And, like his anceſtors, was bitted.

FABLE XLIV.

The HOUND and the HUNTSMAN.

IMpertinence at firſt is borne
With heedleſs ſlight, or ſmiles of ſcorn;
Teaz'd into wrath, what patience bears
The noiſy fool who perſeveres?
The morning wakes, the Huntſman ſounds,
At once ruſh forth the joyful hounds.
They ſeek the wood with eager pace,
Through buſh, through brier, explore the chace.
Now ſcatter'd wide, they try the plain,
And ſnuff the dewy turf in vain.
What care, what induſtry, what pains!
What univerſal ſilence reigns.
Ringwood, a Dog of little fame,

Young

Young, pert, and ignorant of game,
At once diſplays his babbling throat;
The pack, regardleſs of the note,
Purſue the ſcent; with louder ſtrain
He ſtill perſiſts to vex the train.
The Huntſman to the clamour flies;
The ſmacking laſh he ſmartly plies.
His ribs all welk'd, with howling tone
The puppy thus expreſs'd his moan.
I know the muſic of my tongue
Long ſince the pack with envy ſtung.
What will not ſpite? Theſe bitter ſmarts
I owe to my ſuperior parts.
When puppies prate, the Huntſman cry'd,
They ſhow both ignorance and pride:
Fools may our ſcorn, not envy raiſe,
For envy is a kind of praiſe.
Had not thy forward noiſy tongue
Proclaim'd thee always in the wrong,
Thou might'ſt have mingled with the reſt,
And ne'er thy fooliſh noiſe confeſt.
But fools, to talking ever prone,
Are ſure to make their follies known.

FABLE XLV.

The POET and the ROSE.

I Hate the man who builds his name
On ruins of another's fame.
Thus prudes, by characters o'erthrown,
Imagine that they raiſe their own.
Thus Scribblers, covetous of praiſe,
Think ſlander can tranſplant the bays.
Beauties and bards have equal pride,
With both all rivals are decry'd.
Who praiſes LESBIE'S eyes and feature,
Muſt call her ſiſter, aukward creature;
For the kind flatt'ry's ſure to charm,
When we ſome other nymph diſarm.

As

As in the cool of early day
A Poet ſought the ſweets of May,
The garden's fragrant breath aſcends,
And ev'ry ſtalk with odour bends.
A roſe he pluck'd, he gaz'd, admir'd,
Thus ſinging as the Muſe inſpir'd.

Go, Roſe, my CHLOE's boſom grace;
How happy ſhould I prove,
Might I ſupply that envy'd place
With never-fading love!
There, Phœnix like, beneath her eye,
Involv'd in fragrance, burn and die!
Know, hapleſs flower, that thou ſhalt find
More fragrant roſes there;
I ſee thy with'ring head reclin'd
With envy and deſpair!
One common fate we both muſt prove;
You die with envy, I with love.

Spare your compariſons, reply'd
An angry Roſe, who grew beſide.
Of all mankind you ſhould not flout us;
What can a poet do without us!
In ev'ry love-ſong roſes bloom!
We lend you colour and perfume.
Does it to CHLOE's charms conduce,
To ſound her praiſe on our abuſe?
Muſt we, to flatter her, be made
To wither, envy, pine and fade?

FABLE XLVI.

The CUR, the HORSE, and the Shepherd's DOG.

THE lad, of all-ſufficient merit,
With modeſty ne'er damps his ſpirit;
Preſuming on his own deſerts,
On all alike his tongue exerts;

His

His noiſy jokes at random throws,
And pertly ſpatters friends and foes;
In wit and war the bully race
Contribute to their own diſgrace.
Too late the forward youth ſhall find
That jokes are ſometimes paid in kind;
Or if they canker in the breaſt,
He makes a foe who makes a jeſt.

A Village-cur, of ſnappiſh race,
The perteſt puppy of the place,
Imagin'd that his treble throat
Was bleſt with muſic's ſweeteſt note;
In the mid road he baſking lay,
The yelping nuiſance of the way;
For not a creature paſs'd along,
But had a ſample of his ſong.
Soon as the trotting ſteed he hears,
He ſtarts, he cocks his dapper ears;
Away he ſcow'rs, aſſaults his hoof;
Now near him ſnarls, now barks aloof;
With ſhrill impertinence attends;
Nor leave him till the village ends.
It chanc'd, upon this evil day,
A Pad came pacing down the way:
The Cur, with never-ceaſing tongue,
Upon the paſſing traveller ſprung.
The Horſe, from ſcorn provok'd to ire,
Flung backward; rolling in the mire,
The Puppy howl'd, and bleeding lay;
The Pad in peace purſu'd his way.
A Shepherd's Dog, who ſaw the deed,
Deteſting the vexatious breed,
Beſpoke him thus. When coxcombs prate,
They kindle wrath, contempt, or hate;
Thy teazing tongue had judgment try'd,
Thou hadſt not, like a Puppy, dy'd.

FABLE

FABLE XLVII.

The COURT of DEATH.

DEATH, on a ſolemn night of ſtate,
In all the pomp of terror ſate:
Th' attendants of his gloomy reign,
Diſeaſes dire, a ghaſtly train!
Crowd the vaſt Court. With hollow tone,
A voice thus thunder'd from the throne.
This night our miniſter we name,
Let ev'ry ſervant ſpeak his claim;
Merit ſhall bear this ebon wand.
All, at the word, ſtretch'd forth their hand.
Fever, with burning heat poſſeſt,
Advanc'd, and for the wand addreſt.
I to the weekly bills appeal,
Let thoſe expreſs my fervent zeal;
On ev'ry ſlight occaſion near,
With violence I perſevere.
Next Gout appears with limping pace,
Pleads how he ſhifts from place to place;
From head to foot how ſwift he flies,
And ev'ry joint and ſinew plies;
Still working when he ſeems ſuppreſt,
A moſt tenacious ſtubborn gueſt.
A haggard Spectre from the crew
Crawls forth, and thus aſſerts his due.
'Tis I who taint the ſweeteſt joy,
And in the ſhape of love deſtroy:
My ſhanks, ſunk eyes, and noſeleſs face,
Prove my pretention to the place.
Stone urg'd his ever-growing force.
And, next, Conſumption's meagre corſe,
With feeble voice, that ſcarce was heard,
Broke with ſhort coughs, his ſuit preferr'd.
Let none object my ling'ring way,
I gain, like FABIUS, by delay;

Fatigue

Fatigue and weaken ev'ry foe
By long attack, ſecure, though ſlow.
Plague repreſents his rapid power,
Who thinn'd a nation in an hour.
All ſpoke their claim, and hop'd the wand.
Now expectation huſh'd the band,
When thus the Monarch from the throne.
Merit was ever modeſt known.
What, no Phyſician ſpeak his right!
None here! but fees their toils requite.
Let then Intemp'rance take the wand,
Who fills with gold their zealous hand.
You, Fever, Gout, and all the reſt,
(Whom wary men, as foes, deteſt)
Forego your claim; no more pretend:
Intemp'rance is eſteem'd a friend;
He ſhares their mirth, their ſocial joys,
And, as a courted gueſt, deſtroys.
The charge on him muſt juſtly fall.
Who finds employment for you all.

FABLE XLVIII.

The GARDNER and the HOG.

A Gard'ner, of peculiar taſte,
On a young Hog his favour plac'd;
Who fed not with the common herd;
His tray was to the hall preferr'd.
He wallow'd underneath the board,
Or in his maſter's chamber ſnor'd;
Who fondly ſtroak'd him ev'ry day,
And taught him all the puppy's play.
Where'er he went, the grunting friend
Ne'er fail'd his pleaſure to attend.
As on a time, the loving pair
Walk'd forth to tend the garden's care,
The maſter thus addreſs'd the Swine.
My houſe, my garden, all is thine.

On

On turnips feaſt whene'er you pleaſe,
And riot in my beans and peaſe;
If the potatoe's taſte delights,
Or the red carriot's ſweet invites,
Indulge thy morn and evening hours,
But ler due care regard my flowers:
My tulips are my garden's pride.
What vaſt expence thoſe beds ſupply'd!
The Hog by chance one morning roam'd,
Where with new ale the veſſels foam'd.
He munches now the ſteaming grains,
Now with full ſwill the liquor drains.
Intoxicating fumes ariſe;
He reels, he rolls his winking eyes;
Then ſtagg'ring thro' the garden ſcours,
And treads down painted ranks of flowers.
With delving ſnout he turns the ſoil,
And cools his palate with the ſpoil.
The Maſter came, the ruin ſpy'd,
Villain, ſuſpend thy rage, he cry'd.
Haſt thou, thou moſt ungrateful ſot,
My charge, my only charge forgot?
What, all my flowers! No more he ſaid,
But gaz'd, and ſigh'd, and hung his head.
The Hog with ſtutt'ring ſpeech returns:
Explain, Sir, why your anger burns.
See there, untouch'd your tulips ſtrown,
For I devour'd the roots alone.
At this the Gard'ner's paſſion grows;
From oaths and threats he fell to blows.
The ſtubborn brute the blows ſuſtains;
Aſſaults his leg, and tears the veins.
Ah! fooliſh ſwain, too late you find
That ſties were for ſuch friends deſign'd.
Homeward he limps with painful pace,
Reflecting thus on paſt diſgrace:
Who cheriſhes a brutal mate,
Shall mourn the folly ſoon or late.

FABLE

FABLE XLIX.

The MAN and the FLEA.

WHether on earth, in air, or main,
Sure ev'ry thing alive is vain!
Does not the hawk all fowls ſurvey,
As deſtin'd only for his prey?
And do not tyrants, prouder things,
Think men were born for ſlaves to kings?
When the crab views the pearly ſtrands,
Or TAGUS, bright with golden ſands;
Or crawls beſide the coral grove,
And hears the ocean roll above;
Nature is too profuſe, ſays he,
Who gave all theſe to pleaſure me!
When bord'ring pinks and roſes bloom,
And ev'ry garden breathes perfume;
When peaches glow with ſunny dyes,
Like LAURA's cheek, when bluſhes riſe;
When with huge figs the branches bend,
When cluſters from the vine depend;
The ſnail looks round on flow'r and tree,
And cries, All theſe were made for me.
What dignity's in human nature?
Says Man, the moſt conceited creature,
As from a cliff he caſt his eye,
And view'd the ſea and arched ſky;
The ſun was ſunk beneath the main;
The moon and all the ſtarry train,
Hung the vaſt vault of heav'n. The Man
His contemplation thus began.
When I behold this glorious ſhow,
And the wide wat'ry world below,
The ſcaly people of the main,
The beaſt that range the wood or plain,
The wing'd inhabitants of air,
The day, the night, the various year,
And know all theſe by heav'n deſign'd
As gifts to pleaſure human kind;

I cannot

I cannot raiſe my worth too high;
Of what vaſt conſequence am I!
Not of th' importance you ſuppoſe,
Replies a Flea upon his noſe.
Be humble, learn thyſelf to ſcan;
Know, pride was never made for Man.
'Tis vanity that ſwells thy mind.
What, heav'n and earth for thee deſign'd!
For thee, made only for our need,
That more important Fleas might feed.

FABLE L.

The HARE and many FRIENDS.

FRiendſhip, like love, is but a name,
Unleſs to one you ſtint the flame.
The child, whom many fathers ſhare,
Hath ſeldom known a father's care.
'Tis thus in friendſhip; who depend
On many, rarely find a friend.

A Hare who in a civil way,
Comply'd with ev'ry thing, like GAY,
Was known by all the beſtial train
Who haunt the wood, or graze the plain.
Her care was, never to offend,
And ev'ry creature was her friend.
As forth ſhe went at early dawn,
To taſte the dew-beſprinkled lawn,
Behind ſhe hears the hunter's cries,
And from the deep-mouth'd thunder flies.
She ſtarts, ſhe ſtops, ſhe pants for breath;
She hears the near advance of death;
She doubles to miſlead the hound,
And meaſures back her mazy round;
Till, fainting in the public way,
Half-dead with fear ſhe gaſping lay.
What tranſport in her boſom grew,
When firſt the horſe appear'd in view!

et

Let me, ſays ſhe, your back aſcend,
And owe my ſafety to a friend.
You know my feet betray my flight;
To friendſhip ev'ry burden's light.
The Horſe reply'd, Poor honeſt Puſs,
It grieves my heart to ſee thee thus.
Be comforted, relief is near;
For all your friends are in the rear.
She next the ſtately Bull implor'd;
And thus reply'd the mighty lord.
Since ev'ry beaſt alive can tell
That I ſincely wiſh you well,
I may, without offence, pretend
To take the freedom of a friend.
Love calls me hence; a fav'rite cow
Expects me near yon barley-mow;
And when a lady's in the caſe,
You know, all other things give place.
To leave you thus might ſeem unkind;
But ſee, the Goat is juſt behind.
The Goat remark'd her puſſe was high,
Her languid head, her heavy eye:
My back, ſays he, may do you harm;
The Sheep's at hand, and wool is warm.
The Sheep was feeble, and complain'd,
His ſides a load of wool ſuſtain'd:
Said he was ſlow, confeſs'd his fears;
For hounds eat ſheep, as well as Hares.
She now the trotting Calf addreſs'd,
To ſave from death a friend diſtreſs'd.
Shall I, ſays he, of tender age,
In this important care engage?
Older and abler paſs'd you by;
How ſtrong are thoſe! how weak am I!
Should I preſume to bear you hence,
Thoſe friends of mine may take offence.
Excuſe me then. You know my heart,
But deareſt friends, alas! muſt part.
How ſhall we all lament! Adieu:
For ſee the hounds are juſt in view.

END OF THE FIRST PART.

FABLES

BY THE LATE

MR. GAY.

PART THE SECOND.

THESE FABLES were finished by Mr. GAY and intended for the press, a short time before his death; when they were left, with his other papers, to the care of his noble friend and patron the Duke of QUEENSBERRY. His Grace has accordingly permitted them to be made public, and they are here printed from the originals in the author's own hand-writing. We hope they will equally please with his former FABLES, though mostly on subjects of a graver and more political turn. They will certainly shew him to have been (what he esteemed the best character) a man of a truly honest heart, and a sincere lover of his country.

FABLES.

PART THE SECOND.

FABLE I.

The Dog and the Fox.

TO A LAWYER.

I Know you Lawyers can, with eaſe,
Twiſt words and meanings as you pleaſe;
That language, by your ſkill made pliant,
Will bend to favour ev'ry client;
That 'tis the fee directs the ſenſe,
To make out either ſide's pretence.
When you peruſe the cleareſt caſe,
You ſee it with a double face:
For ſcepticiſm's your profeſſion;
You hold there's doubt in all expreſſion.
Hence is the bar with fees ſupply'd,
Hence eloquence takes either ſide.
Your hand would have but paltry gleaning,
Could ev'ry man expreſs his meaning.
Who dares preſume to pen a deed,
Unleſs you previouſly are fee'd?
'Tis drawn; and, to augment the coſt,
In dull prolixity ingroſs'd.
And now we're well ſecur'd by law,
Till the next brother find a flaw.
Read o'er a Will. Was't ever known,
But you could make the will your own?
For when you [illegible], 'tis with intent
To find out meanings never meant.

Since things are thus, *se defendendo*,
I bar fallacious inuendo.
Sagacious PORTA's skill could trace
Some beast or bird in ev'ry face.
The head, the eye, the nose's shape,
Prov'd this an owl, and that an ape.
When, in the sketches thus d[illegible]n'd,
Resemb'lance brings some fri[illegible]nd to mind,
You shew the piece, and give the hint,
And find each feature in the print;
So monstrous-like the portrait's found,
All know it, and the laugh goes round.
Like him I draw from gen'ral nature;
Is't I or you then fix the satire?
So, Sir, I beg you spare your pains
In making comments on my strains.
All private slander I detest,
I judge not of my neighbour's breast:
Party and prejudice I hate,
And write no libels on the state.
Shall not my fables censure vice,
Because a knave is over-nice?
And, lest the guilty hear and dread,
Shall not the decalogue be read?
If I lash vice in gen'ral fiction,
Is't I apply, or self-conviction?
Brutes are my theme. Am I to blame,
If men in morals are the same?
I no man call an ape or ass;
'Tis his own conscience holds the glass.
Thus void of all offence I write:
Who claims the fable, knows his right.

A shepherd's Dog, unskill'd in sports,
Pick'd up acquaintance of all sorts:
Among the rest a Fox he knew;
By frequent chat their friendship grew.
Says Reynard, 'Tis a cruel case,
That man should stigmatize our race.

No

No doubt, among us rogues you find,
As among Dogs and human kind;
And yet (unknown to me and you)
There may be honeſt men and true.
Thus ſlander tries, whate'er it can,
To put us on the foot with man.
Let my own actions recommend;
No prejudice can blind a friend:
You know me free from all diſguiſe;
My honour as my life I prize.
By talk like this, from all miſtruſt
The Dog was cur'd, and thought him juſt.
As on a time the Fox held forth
On conſcience, honeſty, and worth,
Sudden he ſtopt; he cock'd his ear;
Low dropt his bruſhy tail with fear.
Bleſs us! the hunters are abroad.
What's all that clatter on the road?
Hold, ſays the Dog, we're ſafe from harm,
'Twas nothing but a falſe alarm.
At yonder town 'tis market-day;
Some farmer's wife is on the way;
'Tis ſo (I know her pyebald mare)
Dame Dobbins with her poultry-ware.
Reynard grew huff. Says he, This ſneer
From you I little thought to hear:
Your meaning in your looks I ſee.
Pray what's dame Dobbins, friend, to me?
Did I e'er make her poultry thinner?
Prove that I owe the dame a dinner.
Friend, quoth the Cur, I meant no harm:
Then why ſo captious? why ſo warm?
My words, in common acceptation,
Could never give this provocation.
No lamb (for ought I ever knew)
May be more innocent than you.
At this, gall'd Reynard winch'd, and ſwore
Such language ne'er was given before.
What's lamb to me? The ſaucy hint
Shews me, baſe knave, which way you ſquint.

If t'other night your master lost
Three lambs, am I to pay the cost?
Your vile reflections would imply
That I'm the thief. You Dog, you lie.
Thou knave, thou fool, (the Dog reply'd)
The name is just, take either side;
Thy guilt these applications speak:
Sirrah, 'tis conscience makes you squeak.
So saying, on the Fox he flies,
The self-convicted felon dies.

FABLE II.

The VULTURE, the SPARROW, and other BIRDS.

TO A FRIEND IN THE COUNTRY.

ERE I begin, I must premise
Our ministers are good and wise;
So, though malicious tongues apply,
Pray, what care they, or what care I?
If I am free with courts; be't known,
I ne'er presume to mean our own.
If general morals seem to joke
On ministers, and such-like folk,
A captious fool may take offence;
What then? He knows his own pretence.
I meddle with no state-affairs,
But spare my jest to save my ears.
Our present schemes are too profound,
For MACHIAVEL himself to sound:
To censure 'em I've no pretension;
I own they're past my comprehension.
You say your brother wants a place,
('Tis many a younger brother's case)
And that he very soon intends
To ply the court, and teaze his friends.
If there his merits chance to find
A patriot of an open mind,

Whose

Whoſe conſtant actions prove him juſt
To both a king's and people's truſt;
May he, with gratitude, attend,
And owe his riſe to ſuch a friend.
You praiſe his parts, for bus'neſs fit,
His learning, probity, and wit;
But thoſe alone will never do,
Unleſs his patron have 'em too.
I've heard of times (pray God defend us,
We're not ſo good but he can mend us)
When wicked miniſters have trod
On kings and people, law and God;
With arrogance they girt the throne,
And knew no int'reſt but their own.
Then virtue, from preferment barr'd,
Gets nothing but its own reward.
A gang of petty knaves attend 'em,
With proper parts to recommend 'em.
Then if his patron burn with luſt,
The firſt in favour's pimp the firſt.
His doors are never clos'd to ſpies,
Who cheer his heart with double lies;
They flatter him, his foes defame,
So lull the pangs of guilt and ſhame.
If ſchemes of lucre haunt his brain,
Projectors ſwell his greedy train;
Vile brokers ply his private ear
With jobs of plunder for the year;
All conſciences muſt bend and ply;
You muſt vote on, and not know why:
Through thick and thin you muſt go on;
One ſcruple, and your place is gone.
Since plagues like theſe have curs'd a land,
And fav'rites cannot always ſtand;
Good courtiers ſhould for change be ready,
And not have principles too ſteady:
For ſhould a knave ingroſs the pow'r,
(God ſhield the realm from that ſad hour)
He muſt have rogues, or ſlaviſh fools:
For what's a knave without his tools?

Wherever thoſe a people drain,
And ſtrut with infamy and gain;
I envy not their guilt and ſtate,
And ſcorn to ſhare the public hate.
Let their own ſervile creatures riſe,
By ſcreening fraud and venting lies:
Give me, kind heav'n, a private ſtation,
A mind ſerene for contemplation:
Title and profit I reſign;
The poſt of honour ſhall be mine.
My fable read, their merits view,
Then herd who will with ſuch a crew.

In days of yore (my cautious rhimes
Always except the preſent times)
A greedy Vulture, ſkill'd in game,
Inur'd to guilt, unaw'd by ſhame,
Approach'd the throne in evil hour,
And ſtep by ſtep intrudes to pow'r:
When at the royal eagle's ear,
He longs to eaſe the monarch's care.
The monarch grants. With pride elate,
Behold him miniſter of ſtate!
Around him throng the feather'd rout;
Friends muſt be ſerv'd, and ſome muſt out.
Each thinks his own the beſt pretenſion;
This aſks a place, and that a penſion.
The nightingale was ſet aſide,
A forward daw his room ſupply'd.
This bird (ſays he) for buſ'neſs fit,
Hath both ſagacity and wit.
With all his turns, and ſhifts, and tricks,
He's docile, and at nothing ſticks.
Then with his neighbours one ſo free
At all times will connive at me.
The hawk had due diſtinction ſhown,
For parts and talents like his own.
Thouſands of hireling ſocks attend him,
As bluſt'ring bullies to defend him.

At

At once the ravens were diſcarded,
And magpies with their poſts rewarded.
Thoſe fowls of omen I deteſt,
That pry into another's neſt,
State lies muſt loſe all good intent;
For they foreſee and croak th' event.
My friends ne'er think, but talk by rote,
Speak what they're taught, and ſo to vote.
When rogues like theſe (a ſparrow cries)
To honours and employments riſe,
I court no favour, aſk no place;
For ſuch preferment is diſgrace.
Within my thatch'd retreat I find
(What theſe ne'er feel) true peace of mind.

FABLE III.

The BABOON and the POULTRY.

TO A LEVEE-HUNTER.

WE frequently miſplace eſteem,
By judging men by what they ſeem.
To birth, wealth, pow'r, we ſhould allow
Precedence, and our loweſt bow.
In that is due diſtinction ſhown.
Eſteem is virtue's right alone.
With partial eye we're apt to ſee
The man of noble pedigree.
We're prepoſſeſt my lord inherits
In ſome degree his grandſire's merits;
For thoſe we find upon record:
But find him nothing but my lord.
When we, with ſuperficial view,
Gaze on the rich, we're dazzled too.
We know that wealth, well underſtood,
Hath frequent pow'r of doing good:
Then fancy that the thing is done,
As if the pow'r and will were one.

'Thus oft the cheated crowd adore
The thriving knaves that keep 'em poor.
The cringing train of pow'r survey:
What creatures are so low as they!
With what obsequiousness they bend!
To what vile actions condescend!
Their rise is on their meanness built,
And flatt'ry is their smallest guilt.
What homage, rev'rence, adoration,
In ev'ry age, in ev'ry nation,
Have sycophants to pow'r address'd!
No matter who the pow'r possess'd.
Let ministers be what they will,
You find their levees always fill.
Ev'n those who have perplex'd a state,
Whose actions claim contempt and hate,
Had wretches to applaud their schemes,
Though more absurd than madmens dreams.
When barb'rous MOLOCH was invok'd,
The blood of infants only smoak'd!
But here (unless all hist'ry lies)
Whole realms have been a sacrifice.
Look through all courts. 'Tis pow'r we find
The gen'ral idol of mankind;
There worship'd under ev'ry shape;
Alike the lion, fox, and ape
Are follow'd by time-serving slaves,
Rich prostitutes and needy knaves.
Who then shall glory in his post?
How frail his pride, how vain his boast!
The followers of his prosp'rous hour
Are as unstable as his pow'r.
Pow'r, by the breath of flatt'ry nurst,
The more it swells, is nearer burst.
The bubble breaks, the gewgaw ends,
And in a dirty tear descends.

Once on a time, an ancient maid,
By wishes and by time decay'd,

T.

To cure the pangs of reſtleſs thought,
In birds and beaſts amuſement ſought:
Dogs, parrots, apes, her hours employ'd:
With theſe alone ſhe talk'd and toy'd.
A huge Baboon her fancy took,
(Almoſt a man in ſize and look)
He finger'd ev'ry thing he found,
And mimick'd all the ſervants round.
Then too his parts and ready wit
Shew'd him for ev'ry buſineſs fit.
With all theſe talents, 'twas but juſt
That Pug ſhould hold a place of truſt:
So to her fav'rite was aſſign'd
The charge of all her feather'd kind.
'Twas his to tend 'em eve and morn,
And portion out their daily corn.
Behold him now with haughty ſtride,
Aſſume a miniſterial pride.
The morning roſe. In hope of picking,
Swans, turkeys, peacocks, ducks, and chicken,
Fowls of all ranks ſurround his hut,
To worſhip his important ſtrut.
The miniſter appears. The croud,
Now here, now there, obſequious bow'd.
This prais'd his parts, and that his face,
T'other his dignity in place.
From bill to bill the flatt'ry ran:
He hears and bears it like a man:
For, when we flatter ſelf-conceit,
We but his ſentiments repeat.
If we're too ſcrupulouſly juſt,
What profit's in a place of truſt?
The common practice of the great,
Is, to ſecure, a ſnug retreat.
So Pug began to turn his brain
(Like other folks in place) on gain.
An apple-woman's ſtall was near,
Well ſtock'd with fruits through all the year;
Here ev'ry day he cram'd his guts,
Hence were his hoards of pears and nuts;

For 'twas agreed (in way of trade)
His payments ſhould in corn be made?
The ſtock of grain was quickly ſpent,
And no account which way it went.
Then too the Poultry's ſtarv'd condition
Caus'd ſpeculations of ſuſpicion.
The facts were prov'd beyond diſpute;
Pug muſt refund his hoards of fruit:
And, though then miniſter in chief,
Was branded as a public thief.
Diſgrac'd, deſpis'd, confin'd to chains,
He nothing but his pride retains.
A gooſe paſs'd by; he knew the face,
Seen ev'ry levee while in place.
What, no reſpect! no rev'rence ſhown!
How ſaucy are theſe creatures grown!
Not two days ſince (ſays he) you bow'd
The loweſt of my fawning crowd
Proud fool, (replies the gooſe) 'tis true,
Thy corn a flutt'ring levee drew;
For that I join'd the hungry train,
And ſold thee flatt'ry for thy grain.
But then, as now, conceited ape,
We ſaw thee in thy proper ſhape.

FABLE IV.

The ANT in Office.

TO A FRIEND.

YOU tell me, that you apprehend
My verſe may touchy folks offend.
In prudence too you think my rhimes
Should never ſquint at courtiers crimes;
For though nor this nor that is meant,
Can we another's thoughts prevent?
You aſk me if I ever knew
Court-chaplains thus the lawn purſue.

I meddle

I meddle not with gown or lawn;
Poets, I grant, to riſe muſt fawn.
They know great ears are over-nice,
And never ſhock their patron's vice.
But I this hackney path deſpiſe;
'Tis my ambition not to riſe.
If I muſt proſtitute the muſe,
The baſe conditions I refuſe.
I neither flatter nor defame,
Yet own I would bring guilt to ſhame.
If I corruption's hand expoſe,
I make corrupted men my foes,
What then? I hate the paultry tribe,
Be virtue mine; be theirs the bribe.
I no man's property invade;
Corruption's yet no lawful trade.
Nor would it mighty ills produce,
Could I ſhame brib'ry out of uſe.
I know 'twould cramp moſt politicians,
Were they ty'd down to theſe conditions.
'Twould ſtint their power, their riches bound,
And make their parts ſeem leſs profound.
Were they deny'd their proper tools,
How could they lead their knaves and fools?
Were this the caſe, let's take a view,
What dreadful miſchiefs would enſue;
Though it might aggrandize the ſtate,
Could private luxury dine on plate?
Kings might indeed their friends reward,
But miniſters find leſs regard.
Informers, ſycophants, and ſpies,
Would not augment the year's ſupplies.
Perhaps too, take away this prop,
An annual job or too might drop.
Beſides, if penſions were deny'd,
Could avarice ſupport its pride?
It might even miniſters confound,
And yet the ſtate be ſafe and ſound.
I care not though 'tis underſtood
I only mean my country's good;

And

And (let who will my freedom blame)
I wish all courtiers did the same.
Nay, though some folks the less might get,
I wish the nation out of debt.
I put no private man's ambition
With public good in competition:
Rather than have our law defac'd,
I'd vote a minister disgrac'd.
I strike at vice, be't were it will;
And what if great folks take it ill?
I hope, corruption, brib'ry, pension,
One may with detestation mention;
Think you the law (let who will take it)
Can *scandalum magnatum* make it?
I vent no slander, owe no grudge,
Nor of another's conscience judge:
At him or him I take no aim,
Yet dare against all vice declaim.
Shall I not censure breach of trust,
Because knaves know themselves unjust?
That steward whose account is clear,
Demands his honour may appear:
His actions never shun the light,
He is, and would be prov'd upright.
But then you think my Fable bears
Allusion too to state affairs.
I grant it does: And who's so great,
That has the privilege to cheat;
If then in any future reign
(For ministers may thirst for gain)
Corrupted hands defraud the nation;
I bar no reader's application.

An Ant there was, whose forward prate
Controul'd all matters in debate;
Whether he knew the thing or no,
His tongue eternally would go.
For he had impudence at will,
And boasted universal skill.

Ambition

Ambition was his point in view;
Thus by degrees to pow'r he grew.
Behold him now his drift attain:
He's made chief treas'rer of the grain.
But as their ancient laws are juſt,
And puniſh breach of public truſt,
'Tis order'd (leſt wrong application
Should ſtarve that wiſe induſtrious nation)
That all accounts be ſtated clear,
Their ſtock, and what defray'd the year;
That auditors ſhould theſe inſpect,
And public rapine thus be check'd.
For this the ſolemn day was ſet,
The auditors in council met.
The gran'ry-keeper muſt explain,
And balance his account of grain.
He brought (ſince he could not refuſe 'em)
Some ſcraps of paper to amuſe 'em.
An honeſt pismire, warm with zeal,
In juſtice to the public weal,
Thus ſpoke. The nation's hoard is low.
From whence does this profuſion flow?
I know our annual funds amount.
Why ſuch expence; and where's th' account?
With wonted arrogance and pride,
The Ant in office thus reply'd.
Conſider, Sirs, were ſecrets told,
How could the beſt-ſchem'd projects hold?
Should we ſtate-myſteries diſcloſe,
'Twould lay us open to our foes.
My duty and my well-known zeal
Bid me our preſent ſchemes conceal:
But, on my honour, all th' expence
(Though vaſt) was for the ſwarm's defence.
They paſs'd th' account as fair and juſt,
And voted him implicit truſt.
Next year again the gran'ry drain'd,
He thus his innocence maintain'd.
Think how our preſent matters ſtand,
What dangers threat from ev'ry hand;

What

What hosts of turkeys stroll for food,
No farmer's wife but hath her brood.
Consider, when invasion's near,
Intelligence must cost us dear;
And, in this ticklish situation,
A secret told betrays the nation.
But, on my honour, all th' expence
(Though vast) was for the swarm's defence.
Again, without examination,
They thank'd his sage administration.
The year revolves. The treasure spent,
Again in secret service went.
His honour too again was pledg'd
To satisfy the charge alledg'd.
When thus with panic shame possess'd,
An auditor his friends address'd.
What are we? Ministerial tools.
We little knaves are greater fools.
At last this secret is explor'd;
'Tis our corruption thins the hoard.
For ev'ry grain we touch'd, at least
A thousand his own heaps increas'd.
Then, for his kin, and fav'rite spies,
A hundred hardly could suffice.
Thus, for a paltry sneaking bribe,
We cheat ourselves, and all the tribe;
For all the magazine contains,
Grows from our annual toil and pains.
They vote th' account shall be inspected;
The cunning plund'rer is detected;
The fraud is sentenc'd; and his hoard,
As due, to public use restor'd.

FABLE V.

The BEAR in a Boat.

TO A COXCOMB.

THAT man must daily wiser grow,
Whose search is bent himself to know;
Impartially

Impartially he weighs his ſcope,
And on firm reaſon founds his hope;
He tries his ſtrength before the race,
And never ſeeks his own diſgrace;
He knows the compaſs, ſail and oar,
Or never launches from the ſhore;
Before he builds, computes the coſt,
And in no proud purſuit is loſt:
He learns the bounds of human ſenſe,
And ſafely walks within the fence.
Thus, conſcious of his own defect,
Are pride and ſelf-importance check'd.
If then, ſelf-knowledge to purſue,
Direct our life in ev'ry view,
Of all the fools that pride can boaſt,
A Coxcomb claims diſtinction moſt.
Coxcombs are of all ranks and kind;
They're not to ſex or age confin'd,
Or rich, or poor, or great, or ſmall;
And vanity beſots 'em all.
By ignorance is pride increas'd:
Thoſe moſt aſſume who know the leaſt;
Their own falſe balace gives 'em weight,
But ev'ry other finds 'em light.
Not that all Coxcombs follies ſtrike,
And draw our ridicule alike;
To diff'rent merits each pretends.
This in love-vanity tranſcends;
That ſmitten with his face and ſhape,
By dreſs diſtinguiſhes the ape;
T'other with learning crams his ſhelf,
Knows books, and all things but himſelf.
All theſe are fools of low condition,
Compar'd with Coxcombs of ambition.
For thoſe, puff'd up with flatt'ry, dare
Aſſume a nation's various care.
They ne'er the groſſeſt praiſe miſtruſt,
Their ſycophants ſeem hardly juſt;
For theſe, in part alone, atteſt
The flatt'ry their own thoughts ſuggeſt.

What

In this wide ſphere a coxcomb's ſhown
In other realms beſides his own;
The ſelf-deem'd MACHIAVEL at large,
By turns controuls in ev'ry charge.
Does commerce ſuffer in her rights?
'Tis he directs the naval flights.
What ſailor dares diſpute his ſkill?
He'll be an admiral when he will.
Now, meddling in the ſoldier's trade,
Troops muſt be hir'd, and levies made.
He gives ambaſſadors their cue,
His cobbled treaties to renew;
And annual taxes muſt ſuffice
The current blunders to diſguiſe.
When his crude ſchemes in air are loſt,
And millions ſcarce defray the coſt,
His arrogance (nought undiſmay'd)
'Truſting in ſelf-ſufficient aid,
On other rocks miſguides the realm,
And thinks a pilot at the helm.
He ne'er ſuſpects his want of ſkill,
But blunders on from ill to ill;
And, when he fails of all intent,
Blames only unforeſeen event.
Leſt you miſtake the application,
The fable calls me to relation.

A Bear of ſhag and manners rough,
At climbing trees expert enough;
For dext'rouſly, and ſafe from harm,
Year after year he robb'd the ſwarm.
Thus thriving on induſtrious toil,
He glory'd in his pilfer'd ſpoil.
This trick ſo ſwell'd him with conceit,
He thought no enterprize too great.
Alike in ſciences and arts,
He boaſted univerſal parts;
Pragmatic, buſy, buſtling, bold,
His arrogance was uncontroul'd;

And

And thus he made his party good,
And grew dictator of the wood.
The beasts, with admiration, stare,
And think him a prodigious Bear.
Were any common booty got,
'Twas his each portion to allot:
For why, he found their might be picking,
Ev'n in the carving of a chicken.
Intruding thus, he by degrees
Claim'd too the butcher's larger fees.
And now his over-weaning pride
In ev'ry province will preside.
No task too difficult was found:
His blund'ring nose misleads the hound.
In stratagem and subtle arts,
He over-rules the fox's parts.
It chanc'd, as, on a certain day,
Along the bank he took his way,
A boat, with rudder, sail, and oar,
At anchor floated near the shore.
He stopt, and turning to his train,
Thus pertly vents his vaunting strain.
What blund'ring puppies are mankind,
In ev'ry science always blind!
I mock the pedantry of schools.
What are their compasses and rules?
From me that helm shall conduct learn,
And man his ignorance discern.
So saying, with audacious pride,
He gains the boat, and climbs the side.
The beasts astonish'd line the strand.
The anchor's weigh'd, he drives from land:
The slack sail shifts from side to side;
The boat untrim'd admits the tide.
Borne down, adrift, at random tost,
His oar breaks short, the rudder's lost.
The Bear, presuming in his skill,
Is here and there officious still;
Till, striking on the dang'rous sands,
A-ground the shatter'd vessel stands,

To see the bungler thus distrest,
The very fishes sneer and jest.
Ev'n gudgeons join in ridicule,
To mortify the meddling fool.
The clam'rous watermen appear;
Threats, curses, oaths, insult his ear:
Seiz'd, thrash'd, and chain'd, he's dragg'd to land;
Derision shouts along the strand.

FABLE VI.

The SQUIRE and his CUR.

TO A COUNTRY GENTLEMAN.

THE man of pure and simple heart
Through life disdains a double part.
He never needs the screen of lies
His inward bosom to disguise.
In vain malicious tongues assail;
Let envy snarl, let slander rail,
From virtue's shield (secure from wound)
Their blunted, venom'd shafts rebound.
So shines his light before mankind,
His actions prove his honest mind.
If in his country's cause he rise,
Debating senates to advise,
Unbrib'd, unaw'd, he dares impart
The honest dictates of his heart.
No ministerial frown he fears,
But in his virtue perseveres.
But would you play the politician,
Whose heart's averse to intuition,
Your lips at all times, nay, your reason
Must be controul'd by place and season.
What statesman could his pow'r support,
Were lying tongues forbid the court?
Did princely ears to truth attend,
What minister could gain his end?

How

How could he raiſe his tools to place,
And how his honeſt foes diſgrace?
That politician tops his part,
Who readily can lie with art:
The man's proficient in his trade;
His pow'r is ſtrong, his fortune's made.
By that the int'reſt of the throne
Is made ſubſervient to his own:
By that have kings of old, deluded,
All their own friends for his excluded.
By that, his ſelfiſh ſchemes purſuing,
He thrives upon the public ruin.
ANTIOCHUS, with hardy pace,
Provok'd the dangers of the chace;
And, loſt from all his menial train,
Travers'd the woods and pathleſs plain.
A cottage lodg'd the royal gueſt;
The PARTHIAN clown brought forth his beſt.
The king unknown his feaſt enjoy'd,
And various chat the hours employ'd.
From wine what ſudden friendſhip ſprings!
Frankly they talk'd of courts and kings.
We country-folks (the clown replies)
Cou'd ope our gracious monarch's eyes.
The king, (as all our neighbours ſay)
Might he (God bleſs him!) have his way,
Is ſound at heart, and means our good,
And he would do it, if he cou'd.
If truth in courts were not forbid,
Nor kings nor ſubjects would be rid.
Were he in pow'r we need not doubt him:
But that transferr'd to thoſe about him,
On them he throws the regal cares:
And what mind they? Their own affairs.
If ſuch rapacious hands he truſt,
The beſt of men may ſeem unjuſt.
From kings to cobblers 'tis the ſame:
Bad ſervants wound their maſter's fame.
In this our neighbours all agree:
Would the king knew as much as we.

Here

Here he ſtopt ſhort. Repoſe they ſought,
The peaſant ſlept, the monarch thought.
The courtiers learn'd, at early dawn,
Where their loſt ſov'reign was withdrawn.
The guards approach, our hoſt alarms,
With gaudy coats the cottage ſwarms.
The crown and purple robes they bring,
And proſtrate fall before the king.
The clown was call'd, the royal gueſt
By due reward his thanks expreſt.
The king then, turning to the crowd,
Who fawningly before him bow'd,
Thus ſpoke. Since, bent on private gain,
Your councils firſt miſled my reign,
Taught and inform'd by you alone,
No truth the royal ear hath known,
Till here converſing. Hence ye crew,
For now I know myſelf and you.
Whene'er the royal ear's ingroſt,
State-lies but little genius coſt.
The fav'rite then ſecurely robs,
And gleans a nation by his jobbs.
Franker and bolder grown in ill,
He daily poiſons dares inſtil;
And, as his preſent views ſuggeſt,
Inflames or ſooths the royal breaſt.
Thus wicked miniſters oppreſs,
When oft' the monarch means redreſs.
Would kings their private ſubjects hear,
A miniſter muſt talk with fear.
If honeſty oppos'd his views,
He dare not innocence accuſe.
'Twould keep him in ſuch narrow bound,
He could not right and wrong confound.
Happy were kings, could they diſcloſe
Their real friends and real foes!
Were both themſelves and ſubjects known,
A monarch's will might be his own.
Had he the uſe of ears and eyes,
Knaves would no more be counted wiſe.

But

But then a miniſter might loſe
(Hard caſe!) his own ambitious views.
When ſuch as theſe have vex'd a ſtate,
Purſu'd by univerſal hate,
Their falſe ſupport at once hath fail'd,
And perſevering truth prevail'd.
Expos'd, their train of fraud is ſeen;
Truth will at laſt remove the ſcreen.

A country 'Squire, by whim directed,
The true, ſtaunch dogs of chace neglected.
Beneath his board no hound was fed;
His hand ne'er ſtrok'd the ſpaniel's head.
A ſnappiſh Cur, alone careſt,
By lies had baniſh'd all the reſt.
YAP had his ear; and defamation
Gave him full ſcope of converſation.
His ſycophants muſt be preferr'd,
Room muſt be made for all his herd:
Wherefore, to bring his ſchemes about,
Old faithful ſervants all muſt out.

The Cur on ev'ry creature flew,
(As other great mens' puppies do),
Unleſs due court to him were ſhown,
And both their face and bus'neſs known.
No honeſt tongue an audience found:
He worried all the tenants round:
For why, he liv'd in conſtant fear,
Leſt truth by chance ſhould interfere.
If any ſtranger dare intrude,
The noiſy Cur his heels purſu'd.
Now fierce with rage, now ſtruck with dread,
At once he ſnarled, bit, and fled.
Aloof, he bays, with briſtling hair,
And thus in ſecret growls his fear.
Who knows but truth, in this diſguiſe,
May fruſtrate my beſt guarded-lies?
Should ſhe (thus maſk'd) admittance find,
That very hour my ruin's ſign'd.

Now in his howl's continu'd ſound,
Their words were loſt, the voice was drown'd.

Ever

Ever in awe of honeſt tongues,
Thus ev'ry day he ſtrain'd his lungs.
It happen'd, in ill-omen'd hour,
That YAP, unmindful of his pow'r,
Forſook his poſt, to love inclin'd;
A fav'rite bitch was in the wind.
By her ſeduc'd, in am'rous play,
They friſk'd the joyous hours away.
Thus by untimely love purſuing,
Like ANTONY, he ſought his ruin.
For now the 'Squire, unvexed with noiſe,
An honeſt neighbour's chat enjoys.
Be free (ſays he), your mind impart;
I love a friendly open heart.
Methinks my tenants ſhun my gates;
Why ſuch a ſtranger grown of late?
Pray tell me what offence they find:
'Tis plain they're not ſo well inclin'd.
Turn off your Cur (the farmer cries)
Who feeds your ear with daily lies.
His ſnarling inſolence offends:
'Tis he that keeps you from your friends.
Were but that ſaucy puppy checkt,
You'd find again the ſame reſpect.
Hear only him, he'll ſwear it too,
That all our hatred is to you.
But learn from us your true eſtate;
'Tis that curs'd Cur alone we hate.
The 'Squire heard truth. Now YAP ruſh'd in;
The wide hall echoes with his din:
Yet truth preva il'd; and, with diſgrace,
The Dog was cu dgell'd out of place.

FABLE VII.

The COUNTRYMAN and JUPITER.

TO MYSELF.

HAVE you a friend (look round and ſpy)
So fond, ſo prepoſſeſs'd as I?

Your

Your faults, ſo obvious to mankind,
My partial eyes could never find.
When, by the breath of fortune blown,
Your airy caſtles were o'erthrown;
Have I been over-prone to blame,
Or mortify'd your hours with ſhame?
Was I e'er known to damp your ſpirit,
Or twit you with the want of merit?
'Tis not ſo ſtrange, that fortune's frown
Still perſeveres to keep you down.
Look round, and ſee what others do.
Would you be rich and honeſt too?
Have you (like thoſe ſhe rais'd to place)
Been opportunely mean and baſe?
Have you (as times requir'd) reſign'd
Truth, honour, virtue, peace of mind?
If theſe are ſcruples, give her o'er;
Write, practice morals, and be poor.
The gifts of fortune truly rate;
Then tell me what would mend your ſtate.
If happineſs on wealth were built,
Rich rogues might comfort find in guilt;
As grows the miſer's hoarded ſtore,
His fears, his wants, increaſe the more.
Think, GAY, (what ne'er may be the caſe)
Should fortune take you into grace,
Would that your happineſs augment?
What can ſhe give beyond content?
Suppoſe yourſelf a wealthy heir,
With a vaſt annual income clear!
In all the affluence you poſſeſs,
You might not feel one care the leſs.
Might you not then (like others) find,
With change of fortune, change of mind?
Perhaps, profuſe beyond all rule,
You might ſtart out a glaring fool;
Your luxury might break all bounds:
Plate, table, horſes, ſtewards, hounds,
Might ſwell your debts: then, luſt of play
No regal income can defray.

Sunk is all credit, writs assail,
And doom your future life to jail.
Or were you dignify'd with pow'r,
Would that avert one pensive hour?
You might give avarice its swing,
Defraud a nation, blind a king:
Then, from the hirelings in your cause,
Though daily fed with false applause,
Could it a real joy impart?
Great guilt knew never joy at heart.
Is happiness your point in view?
(I mean the intrinsic and the true)
She nor in camps or courts resides,
Nor in the humble cottage hides;
Yet found alike in ev'ry sphere;
Who finds content, will find her there.
O'erspent with toil, beneath the shade,
A peasant rested on his spade.
Good gods! he cries, 'tis hard to bear
This load of life from year to year.
Soon as the morning streaks the skies,
Industrious labour bids me rise;
With sweat I earn my homely fare.
And ev'ry day renews my care.
JOVE heard the discontented strain,
And thus rebuk'd the murm'ring swain.
Speak out your wants then, honest friend:
Unjust complaints the gods offend.
If you repine at partial fate,
Instruct me what could mend your state.
Mankind in ev'ry station see.
What wish you? Tell me what you'd be.
So said, upborne upon a cloud.
The clown survey'd the anxious crowd.
Yon face of care, says Jove, behold,
His bulky bags are fill'd with gold.
See with what joy he counts it o'er!
That sum to-day hath swell'd his store.
Were I that man, (the Peasant cry'd)
What blessing could I ask beside?

Hold, says the God; first learn to know
True happiness from outward show.
This optic glass of intuition ——
Here, take it, view his true condition.
He look'd, and saw the miser's breast,
A troubled ocean, ne'er at rest;
Want ever stares him in the face,
And fear anticipates disgrace:
With conscious guilt he saw him start;
Extortion gnaws his throbbing heart;
And never, or in thought or dream,
His breast admits one happy gleam.
May Jove, he cries, reject my pray'r,
And guard my life from guilt and care.
My soul abhors that wretch's fate.
O keep me in my humb'e state!
But see, amidst a gaudy crowd,
Yon minister, so gay and proud,
On him what happiness attends,
Who thus rewards his grateful friends!
First take the glass, the God replies;
Man views the world with partial eyes.
Good gods! exclaims the startled wight,
Defend me from this hideous sight!
Corruption, with corrosive smart,
Lies cank'ring on his guilty heart:
I see him, with polluted hand,
Spread the contagion o'er the land.
Now avarice with insatiate jaws,
Now rapine with her harpy claws,
His bosom tears. His conscious breast
Groans, with a load of crimes oppress.
See him, mad and drunk with power,
Stand tott'ring on ambition's tower.
Sometimes, in speeches vain and proud,
His boasts insult the nether crowd;
Now seiz'd with giddiness and fear,
He trembles left his fall is near.
Was ever wretch like this, he cries!
Such misery in such disguise!

The change, O JOVE, I diſavow;
Still be my lot the ſpade and plough.
He next, confirm'd by ſpeculation,
Rejects the lawyer's occupation;
For he the ſtateſman ſeem'd in part,
And bore ſimilitude of heart.
Nor did the ſoldier's trade inflame
His hopes with thirſt of ſpoil and fame.
The miſeries of war he mourn'd;
Whole nations into deſarts turn'd.
By theſe have laws and rights been brav'd;
By theſe was free-born man inſlav'd:
When battles and invaſion ceaſe,
Why ſwarm they in a land of peace?
Such change (ſays he) may I decline;
The ſcythe and civil arms be mine!
Thus, weighing life in each condition,
The Clown withdrew his raſh petition.
When thus the God: How mortals err!
If you true happineſs prefer,
'Tis to no rank of life confin'd,
But dwells in ev'ry honeſt mind.
Be juſtice then your ſole purſuit:
Plant virtue, and content's the fruit.
So JOVE, to gratify the Clown,
Where firſt he found him ſet him down.

FABLE VIII.

The MAN, the CAT, the DOG, and the FLY.

TO MY NATIVE COUNTRY.

HAIL, happy land, whoſe fertile grounds
The liquid fence of NEPTUNE bounds!
By bounteous nature ſet apart,
The ſeat of induſtry and of art!
O BRITAIN! choſen port of trade,
May lux'ry ne'er thy ſons invade;
May never miniſter (intent
His private treaſures to augment)

Corrup

Corrupt thy ſtate. If jealous foes
Thy rights of commerce dare oppoſe,
Shall not thy fleets their rapine awe?
Who is't preſcribes the ocean law?
Whenever neighb'ring ſtates contend,
Tis thine to be the gen'ral friend.
What is't, who rules in other lands?
On trade alone thy glory ſtands.
That benefit is unconfin'd,
Diffuſing good among mankind:
That firſt gave luſtre to thy reigns,
And ſcatter'd plenty o'er thy plains:
'Tis that alone thy wealth ſupplies,
And draws all EUROPE's envious eyes.
Be commerce then thy ſole deſign;
Keep that, and all the world is thine.
When naval traffic ploughs the main,
Who ſhares not in the merchant's gain?
'Tis that ſupports the regal ſtate,
And makes the farmer's heart elate:
The num'rous flocks, that clothe the land,
Can ſcarce ſupply the loom's demand;
Prolific culture glads the fields,
And the bare heath a harveſt yields.
Nature expects mankind ſhould ſhare
The duties of the public care.
Who's born for ſloth? To ſome we find
The plough-ſhare's annual toil aſſign'd.
Some at the ſounding anvil glow;
Some the ſwift-gliding ſhuttle throw:
Some, ſtudious of the wind and tide,
From pole to pole our commerce guide:
Some (taught by induſtry) impart
With hands and feet the works of art:
While ſome, of genius more refin'd,
With head and tongue aſſiſt mankind:
Each aiming at one common end,
Proves to the whole a needful friend.
Thus, born each other's uſeful aid
By turns are obligations paid.

The monarch, when his table's ſpread,
Is to the clown oblig'd for bread;
And when in all his glory dreſt,
Owes to the loom his royal veſt.
Do not the maſon's toil and care
Protect him from th' inclement air!
Does not the cutler's art ſupply
The ornament that guards his thigh!
All theſe, in duty to the throne,
Their common obligations own.
'Tis he (his own and peoples' cauſe)
Protects their properties and laws.
Thus they their honeſt toil employ,
And with content their fruits enjoy.
In ev'ry rank, or great or ſmall,
'Tis induſtry ſupports us all.

The animals, by want oppreſs'd,
To man their ſervices addreſs'd:
While each purſu'd their ſelfiſh good,
They hunger'd for precarious food.
Their hours with anxious cares were vext;
One day they fed, and ſtarv'd the next.
They ſaw that plenty, ſure and rife,
Was found alone in ſocial life;
That mutual induſtry profeſs'd,
The various wants of man redreſs'd.

The Cat, half famiſh'd, lean and weak,
Demands the privilege to ſpeak.

Well, Puſs, (ſays Man) and what can you
To benefit the public do?

The Cat replies. Theſe teeth, theſe claws
With vigilance ſhall ſerve the cauſe.
The mouſe, deſtroy'd by my purſuit,
No longer ſhall your feaſts pollute;
Nor rats, from nightly ambuſcade,
With waſteful teeth your ſtores invade.

I grant, ſays Man, to gen'ral uſe
Your parts and talents may conduce;
For rats and mice purloin our grain,
And threſhers whirl the flail in vain:

Thus

Thus ſhall the Cat, a foe to ſpoil,
Protect the farmer's honeſt toil.
Then turning to the Dog, he cry'd,
Well, Sir; be next your merits try'd.
Sir, ſays the Dog, by ſelf-applauſe
We ſeem to own a friendleſs cauſe.
Aſk thoſe who know me, if diſtruſt
E'er found me treach'rous or unjuſt?
Did I e'er faith or friendſhip break?
Aſk all thoſe creatures; let them ſpeak.
My vigilance and truſty zeal
Perhaps might ſuit the public weal.
Might not your flocks in ſafety feed,
Were I to guard the fleecy breed?
Did I the nightly watches keep,
Could thieves invade you while you ſleep?
The man replies. 'Tis juſt and right;
Rewards ſuch ſervice ſhould requite.
So rare, in property, we find
Truſt uncorrupt among mankind,
That, taken in a public view,
The firſt diſtinction is your due.
Such merits all reward tranſcend:
Be then my comrade and my friend.
Addreſſing now the Fly: From you
What public ſervice can accrue?
From me! (the flutt'ring inſect ſaid)
I thought you knew me better bred.
Sir, I'm a gentleman. Is't fit
That I to induſtry ſubmit?
Let mean mechanics, to be fed
By bus'neſs earn ignoble bread.
Loſt in exceſs of daily joys,
No though, no care my life annoys.
At noon (the lady's matin hour)
I ſip the tea's delicious flower.
On cates luxuriouſly I dine,
And drink the fragrance of the vine.
Studious of elegance and eaſe,
Myſelf alone I ſeek to pleaſe.

The man his pert conceit derides,
And thus the uſeleſs coxcomb chides.
Hence, from that peach, that downy ſeat;
No idle fool deſerves to eat.
Could you have ſapp'd the bluſhing rind,
And on that pulp ambroſial din'd,
Had not ſome hand, with ſkill and toil,
To raiſe the tree, prepar'd the ſoil?
Conſider, ſot, what would enſue,
Were all ſuch worthleſs things as you.
You'd ſoon be forc'd (by hunger ſtung)
To make your dirty meals on dung;
On which ſuch deſpicable need,
Unpitied, is reduc'd to feed.
Beſides, vain ſelfiſh inſect, learn,
(If you can right and wrong diſcern)
That he who, with induſtrious zeal,
Contributes to the public weal,
By adding to the common good,
His own hath rightly underſtood.
So ſaying, with a ſudden blow,
He laid the noxious vagrant low.
Cruſh'd in his luxury and pride,
The ſpunger on the public dy'd.

FABLE IX.

The JACKALL, LEOPARD, and other Beaſts.

TO A MODERN POLITICIAN.

I Grant corruption ſways mankind;
That int'reſt too perverts the mind;
That bribes have blinded common ſenſe,
Foil'd reaſon, truth, and eloquence:
I grant you too, our preſent crimes
Can equal thoſe of former times.
Againſt plain facts ſhall I engage,
To vindicate our righteous age?
I know, that in a modern fiſt,
Bribes in full energy ſubſiſt.

Since

Since then these arguments prevail,
And itching palms are still so frail,
Hence politicians you suggest,
Should drive the nail that goes the best;
That it shows parts and penetration,
To ply men with the right temptation.
To this I humbly must dissent:
Premising, no reflection's meant.
Does justice or the client's sense
Teach lawyers either side's defence?
The fee gives eloquence its spirit;
That only is the client's merit.
Does art, wit, wisdom, or address,
Obtain the prostitute's caress?
The guinea (as in other trades)
From ev'ry hand alike persuades.
Man, Scripture says, is prone to evil,
But does that vindicate the devil?
Besides, the more mankind are prone,
The less the devil's parts are shown.
Corruption's not of modern date;
It hath been try'd in ev'ry state.
Great knaves of old their power have fenc'd,
By places, pensions, bribes, dispens'd;
By these they glory'd in success,
And impudently dar'd oppress;
By these despotick they sway'd,
And slaves extoll'd the hand that pay'd;
Nor parts nor genius were employ'd,
By these alone were realms destroy'd.
Now see these wretches in disgrace,
Stript of their treasures, pow'r, and place;
View 'em abandon'd and forlorn,
Expos'd to just reproach and scorn.
What now is all your pride, your boast?
Where are your slaves, your flatt'ring host?
What tongues now feed you with applause?
Where are the champions of your cause?
Now ev'n that very fawning train
Which shar'd the gleanings of your gain,

Preſs foremoſt who ſhall firſt accuſe
Your ſelfiſh jobbs, your paltry views,
Your narrow ſchemes, your breach of truſt,
And want of talents to be juſt.
What fools were theſe amidſt their pow'r!
How thoughtleſs of their adverſe hour!
What friends were made? A hireling herd,
For temporary votes preferr'd.
Was it, theſe ſycophants to get,
Your bounty ſwell'd a nation's debt?
You're bit. For theſe, like Swiſs, attend;
No longer pay, no longer friend.
The Lion is (beyond diſpute)
Allow'd the moſt majeſtic brute;
His valour and his gen'rous mind
Prove him ſuperior of his kind.
Yet to Jackalls ('tis averr'd)
Some Lions have their power transferr'd:
As if the parts of pimps and ſpies
To govern foreſts could ſuffice.
Once, ſtudious of his private good,
A proud Jackall oppreſs'd the wood;
To cram his own inſatiate jaws,
Invaded property and laws
The foreſt groans with diſcontent,
Freſh wrongs the gen'ral hate foment.
The ſpreading murmurs reach'd his ear;
His ſecret hours were vex'd with fear.
Night after night he weighs the caſe,
And feels the terrors of diſgrace.
By friends (ſays he) I'll guard my ſeat,
By thoſe malicious tongues defeat:
I'll ſtrengthen pow'r by new allies,
And all my clam'rous foes deſpiſe.
To make the gen'rous beaſts his friend:
He cringes, fawns, and condeſcends;
But thoſe repuls'd his abject court,
And ſcorn'd oppreſſion to ſupport.
Friends muſt be had. He can't ſubſiſts,
Bribes ſhall new proſelytes inliſt.

But theſe nought weigh'd in honeſt paws;
For bribes confeſs'd a wicked cauſe;
Yet think not ev'ry paw withſtands
What had prevail'd in human hands.
A tempting turnip's ſilver ſkin
Drew a baſe Hog through thick and thin.
Bought with a ſtag's delicious haunch,
The mercenary wolf was ſtanch:
The convert fox grew warm and hearty,
A pullet gain'd him to the party:
The golden pippin in his fiſt,
A chatt'ring monkey join'd the liſt.
But ſoon, expos'd to public hate,
The fav'rite's fall redreſs'd the ſtate.
The Leopard, vindicating right,
Had brought his ſecret frauds to light.
As rats, before the manſion falls,
Deſert late hoſpitable walls,
In ſhoals the ſervile creatures run,
To bow before the riſing ſun.
The hog with warmth expreſs'd his zeal,
And was for hanging thoſe that ſteal;
But hop'd, though low, the public hoard
Might half a turnip ſtill afford.
Since ſaving meaſures were profeſt,
A lamb's head was the wolf's requeſt.
The fox ſubmitted, if to touch
A goſling would be deem'd too much.
The monkey thought his grin and chatter,
Might aſk a nut or ſome ſuch matter.
Ye hirelings, hence (the Leopard cries);
Your venal conſcience I deſpiſe.
He who the public good intends,
By bribes needs never purchaſe friends.
Who acts this juſt, this open part,
Is propt by ev'ry honeſt heart.
Corruption now too late hath ſhow'd,
That bribes are always ill-beſtow'd.
By you your bubbled maſters taught,
Time-ſerving tools, not friends, are bought.

FABLE X.

The Degenerate Bees.

TO THE REVEREND DR. SWIFT, DEAN OF ST. PATARICK'S.

THOUGH courts the practice disallow,
A friend at all times I'll avow
In politics I know 'tis wrong:
A friendship may be kept too long;
And that they call the prudent part,
Is to wear int'rest next the heart.
As the times take a different face,
Old friendships should to new give place.
I know too you have many foes,
That owning you is sharing those;
That ev'ry knave in ev'ry station,
Of high and low denomination,
For what you speak, and what you write,
Dread you at once, and bear you spite.
Such freedoms in your works are shown,
They can't enjoy what's not their own.
All dunces too in church and state
In frothy nonsense shew their hate;
With all the petty scribbling crew,
(And those pert sots are not a few,)
'Gainst you and POPE their envy spurt.
The booksellers alone are hurt.
Good gods! by what a powerful race
(For blockheads may have pow'r and place)
Are scandals rais'd and libels writ!
To prove your honesty and wit!
Think with yourself: Those worthy men,
You know, have suffer'd by your pen.
From them you've nothing but your due.
From thence, 'tis plain, your friends are few.
Except myself, I know of none,
Besides the wise and good alone.

To

To ſet the caſe in fairer light,
My fable ſhall the reſt recite;
Which (tho' unlike our preſent ſtate)
I for the moral's ſake relate.

A Bee of cunning, not of parts,
Luxurious, negligent of arts,
Rapacious, arrogant, and vain,
Greedy of pow'r, but more of gain,
Corruption ſow'd throughout the hive.
By petty rogues the great ones thrive.
As pow'r and wealth his views ſupply'd,
'Twas ſeen in overbearing pride.
With him loud impudence had merit;
The Bee of conſcience wanted ſpirit;
And thoſe who follow'd honour's rules,
Were laugh'd to ſcorn for ſqueamiſt fools.
Wealth claim'd diſtinction, favour, grace;
And poverty alone was baſe.
He treated induſtry with ſlight,
Unleſs he found his profit by't.
Rights, laws, and liberties gave way,
To bring his ſelfiſh ſchemes in play.
The ſwarm forgot the common toil,
To ſhare the gleanings of his ſpoil.
While vulgar ſouls, of narrow parts,
Waſte life in low mechanic arts,
Let us (ſays he) to genius born,
The drudg'ry of our fathers ſcorn.
The waſp and drone, you muſt agree,
Live with more elegance than we.
Like gentlemen they ſport and play;
No buſ'neſs interrupts the day:
Their hours to luxury they give,
And nobly on their neighbours live.
A ſtubborn Bee, among the ſwarm,
With honeſt indignation warm,
Thus from his cell with zeal reply'd,
I ſlight thy frowns, and hate thy pride.

The

The laws our native rights protect;
Offending thee, I those respect.
Shall luxury corrupt the hive,
And none against the torrent strive?
Exert the honour of your race;
He builds his rise on your disgrace.
'Tis industry our state maintains:
'Twas honest toils and honest gains
That rais'd our sires to pow'r and fame.
Be virtuous; save yourselves from shame.
Know, that in selfish ends pursuing,
You scramble for the public ruin.
He spoke; and, from his cell dismiss'd,
Was insolently scoff'd and hiss'd.
With him a friend or two resign'd,
Disdaining the degen'rate kind.
These drones (says he) these insects vile,
(I treat them in their proper style)
May for a time oppress the state.
They own our virtue by their hate;
By that our merits they reveal,
And recommend our public zeal;
Disgrac'd by this corrupted crew,
We're honour'd by the virtuous few.

FABLE XI.

The PACK-HORSE and the CARRIER.

TO A YOUNG NOBLEMAN.

BEGIN, my Lord, in early youth,
To suffer, nay, encourage truth:
And blame me not for disrespect,
If I the flatt'rer's style reject;
With that, by menial tongues supply'd,
You're daily cocker'd up in pride.
The tree's distinguish'd by the fruit.
Be virtue then your first pursuit;
Set your great ancestors in view,
Like them deserve the title too;

Like

Like them ignoble actions ſcorn:
Let virtue prove you greatly born.
Though with leſs plate their ſide-board ſhone,
Their conſcience always was their own;
They ne'er at levees meanly fawn'd,
Nor was their honour yearly pawn'd;
Their hands, by no corruption ſtain'd,
The miniſterial bribe diſdain'd;
They ſerv'd the crown with loyal zeal;
Yet, jealous of the public weal,
They ſtood the bulwark of our laws,
And wore at heart their country's cauſe;
By neither place or penſion bought,
They ſpoke and voted as they thought.
Thus did your ſires adorn their ſeat;
And ſuch alone are truly great.
If you the paths of learning ſlight,
You're but a dunce in ſtronger light;
In foremoſt rank the coward plac'd,
Is more conſpicuouſly diſgrac'd.
If you to ſerve a paltry end,
To knaviſh jobbs can condeſcend,
We pay you the contempt that's due;
In that you have precedence too.
Whence had you this illuſtrious name?
From virtue and unblemiſh'd fame.
By birth the name alone deſcends;
Your honour on yourſelf depends:
Think not your coronet can hide
Aſſuming ignorance and pride.
Learning by ſtudy muſt be won,
'Twas ne'er entail'd from ſon to ſon.
Superior worth your rank requires;
For that mankind reveres your ſires:
If you degen'rate from your race,
Their merits heighten your diſgrace.

A Carrier, ev'ry night and morn,
Would ſee his horſes eat their corn:

This

This sunk the hostler's vails, 'tis true;
But then his horses had their due.
Were we so cautious in all cases,
Small gain would rise from greater places.
The manger now had all its measure;
He heard the grinding teeth with pleasure:
When all at once confusion rung;
They snorted, jostled, bit, and flung.
A Pack-horse turn'd his head aside,
Foaming, his eye-balls swell'd with pride.
Good gods! (says he) how hard's my lot!
Is then my high descent forgot?
Reduc'd to drudg'ry and disgrace,
(A life unworthy of my race)
Must I too bear the vile attacks
Of ragged scrubs, and vulgar hacks?
See scurvy ROAN, that brute ill-bred,
Dares from the manger thrust my head!
Shall I, who boast a noble line,
On offals of these creatures dine?
Kick'd by old BALL! so mean a foe!
My honour suffers by the blow.
NEWMARKET speaks my grandsire's fame,
All jockeys still revere his name:
There yearly are his triumphs told,
There all his massy plates inroll'd.
Whene'er led forth upon the plain,
You saw him with a liv'ry train;
Returning too with laurels crown'd,
You heard the drums and trumpets sound.
Let it then, Sir, be understood,
Respect's my due; for I have blood.
Vain-glorious fool! (the Carrier cry'd)
Respect was never paid to pride.
Know, 'twas thy giddy wilful heart
Reduc'd thee to this slavish part.
Did not thy headstrong youth disdain
To learn the conduct of the rein?
Thus coxcombs, blind to real merit,
In vicious frolics fancy spirit.

What

What is't to me by whom begot?
Thou reſtive, pert, conceited ſot.
Your ſires I reverence; 'tis there due:
But, worthleſs fool, what's that to you?
Aſk all the Carriers on the road,
They'll ſay thy keeping's ill beſtow'd.
Then vaunt no more thy noble race,
That neither mends thy ſtrength or pace.
What profits me thy boaſt of blood?
An aſs hath more intrinſic good.
By outward ſhew let's not be cheated;
An aſs ſhould like an aſs be treated.

FABLE XII.

PAN and FORTUNE.

TO A YOUNG HEIR.

SOON as your father's death was known,
(As if th' eſtate had been their own)
The gameſters outwardly expreſt
The decent joy within your breaſt.
So laviſh in your praiſe they grew,
As ſpoke their certain hopes in you.
One counts your income of the year,
How much in ready money clear
No houſe, ſays he, is more compleat,
The garden 's elegant and great.
How fine the park around it lies!
The timber 's of a noble ſize!
Then count his jewels and his plate.
Beſides, 'tis no entail'd eſtate.
If caſh run low, his lands in fee
Are, or for ſale, or mortgage free.
Thus they, before you threw the main,
Seem to anticipate their gain.
Would you, when thieves were known abroad,
Bring forth your treaſures in the road?

Would

Would not the fool abet the ſtealth,
Who raſhly thus expos'd his wealth?
Yet this you do when'er you play
Among the gentlemen of prey.
Could fools to keep their own contrive,
On what, on whom could gameſters thrive?
Is it in charity you game,
To ſave your worthy gang from ſhame?
Unleſs you furniſh'd daily bread,
Which way could idleneſs be fed?
Could theſe profeſſors of deceit
Within the law no longer cheat,
They muſt run bolder riſks for prey,
And ſtrip the trav'ler on the way.
Thus in your annual rents they ſhare,
And 'ſcape the nooſe from year to year.
Conſider, ere you make the bett,
That ſum might croſs your tailor's debt.
When you the pilf'ring rattle ſhake,
Is not your honour too at ſtake?
Muſt you not by mean lies evade
To-morrow's duns from ev'ry trade?
By promiſes ſo often paid,
Is yet your tailor's bill defray'd?
Muſt you not pitifully fawn,
To have your butcher's writ withdrawn?
This muſt be done. In debts of play
Your honour ſuffers no delay:
And not this year's and next year's rent
The ſons of rapine can content.
Look round. The wrecks of play behold,
Eſtates diſmember'd, mortgag'd, ſold!
Their owners, not to jails confin'd,
Shew equal poverty of mind.
Some, who the ſpoil of knaves were made,
Too late attempt to learn their trade.
Some, for the folly of one hour,
Become the dirty tools of pow'r,
And, with the mercenary liſt,
Upon court-charity ſubſiſt.

You'll

You'll find at laſt this maxim true,
Fools are the game which knaves purſue.

The foreſt (a whole cent'ry's ſhade)
Muſt be one waſteful ruin made.
No mercy's ſhewn to age or kind;
The general maſſacre is ſign'd.
The park too ſhares the dreadful fate,
For duns grow louder at the gate.
Stern clowns, obedient to the 'Squire,
(What will not barb'rous hands for hire!)
With brawny arms repeat the ſtroke.
Fall'n are the elm and rev'rend oak:
Through the long wood loud axes ſound,
And echo groan's with ev'ry wound.
To ſee the deſolation ſpread,
PAN drops a tear, and hangs his head:
His boſom now with fury burns:
Beneath his hoof the dice he ſpurns.
Cards too, in peeviſh paſſion torn,
The ſport of whirling winds are borne.
To ſnails invet'rate hate I bear,
Who ſpoil the verdure of the year;
The caterpillar I deteſt,
The blooming ſpring's voracious peſt;
The locuſt too, whoſe rav'nous band
Spreads ſudden famine o'er the land.
But what are theſe; The dice's throw
At once hath laid a forreſt low.
The cards are dealt, the bett is made,
And the wide park hath loſt its ſhade.
Thus is my kingdom's pride defac'd,
And all its ancient glories waſte.
All this (he cries) is FORTUNE's doing:
'Tis thus ſhe meditates my ruin.
By FORTUNE, that falſe, fickle jade,
More havock in one hour is made,
Than all the hungry inſect race,
Combin'd, can in an age deface.

FORTUNE,

FORTUNE, by chance, who near him paſt,
O'erheard the vile aſperſion caſt.
Why, PAN (ſays ſhe) what's all this rant!
'Tis ev'ry country-bubble's cant.
Am I the patroneſs of vice?
Is't I who cog or palm the dice?
Did I the ſhuffling art reveal,
To mark the cards, or range the deal?
In all th' employments men purſue,
I mind the leaſt what gameſters do.
There may (if computation 's juſt)
One now and then my conduct truſt:
I blame the fool, for what can I,
When ninety-nine my pow'r defy?
Theſe truſt alone their fingers ends,
And not one ſtake on me depends.
Whene'er the gaming-board is ſet,
Two claſſes of mankind are met:
But if we count the greedy race,
The knaves fill up the greater ſpace.
'Tis a groſs error, held in ſchools,
That FORTUNE always favours fools.
In play it never bears diſpute;
That doctrine theſe fell'd oaks confute.
Then why to me ſuch rancour ſhew?
'Tis Folly, PAN, that is thy foe.
By me his late eſtate he won,
But he by Folly was undone.

FABLE XIII.

PLUTUS, CUPID, and TIME.

OF all the burdens man muſt bear,
Time ſeems moſt galling and ſevere:
Beneath this grievous load oppreſs'd,
We daily meet ſome friend diſtreſs'd.
What can one do? I roſe at nine.
'Tis full ſix hours before we dine;

Six

Six hours! no earthly thing to do!
Would I had doz'd in bed till two.
A pamphlet is before him ſpread,
And almoſt half a page is read;
Tir'd with the ſtudy of the day,
The flutt'ring ſheets are toſs'd away.
He opes his ſnuff-box, hums an air,
Then yawns, and ſtretches in his chair.
Not twenty, by the minute-hand!
Good gods! ſays he, my watch muſt ſtand?
How muddling 'tis on books to pore!
I thought I'd read an hour or more.
The morning, of all hours, I hate.
One can't contrive to riſe too late.
To make the minutes faſter run,
Then too his tireſome ſelf to ſhun,
To the next coffee-houſe he ſpeeds,
Takes up the news, ſome ſcraps he reads.
Saunt'ring, from chair to chair he trails;
Now drinks his tea, now bites his nails.
He ſpies a part'ner of his woe;
By chat afflictions lighter grow;
Each other's grievances they ſhare,
And thus their dreadful hours compare.
Says TOM, ſince all men muſt confeſs,
That Time lies heavy more or leſs;
Why ſhould it be ſo hard to get
Till two, a party at piquet?
Play might relieve the lagging morn:
By cards long wintry nights are borne.
Does not quadrille amuſe the fair,
Night after night, throughout the year?
Vapours and ſpleen forgot, at play
They cheat uncounted hours away.
My caſe, ſays WILL, then muſt be hard,
By want of ſkill from play debarr'd
Courtiers kill Time by various ways;
Dependence wears out half their days.
How happy theſe, whoſe Time ne'er ſtands
Attendance takes it off their hands.

Were

Were it not for this curſed ſhow'r,
The park had whil'd away an hour.
At court, without or place or view,
I daily loſe an hour or two.
It fully anſwers my deſign,
When I have pick'd up friends to dine,
The tavern makes our burden light;
Wine puts our Time and care to flight.
At ſix (hard caſe!) they call to pay.
Where can one go? I hate the play.
From ſix till ten! Unleſs I ſleep,
One cannot ſpend the hours ſo cheap.
The comedy's no ſooner done,
But ſome aſſembly is begun;
Loit'ring from room to room I ſtray;
Converſe, but nothing hear or ſay:
Quite tir'd, from fair to fair I roam.
So ſoon! I dread the thoughts of home.
From thence, to quicken ſlow-pac'd night,
Again my tavern-friends invite:
Here too our early mornings paſs,
Till drouſy ſleep retards the glaſs.
Thus they their wretched life bemoan,
And make each other's caſe their own.
Conſider, friends, no hour rolls on,
But ſomething of your grief is gone.
Were you to ſchemes of buſ'neſs bred,
Did you the paths of learning tread;
Your hours, your days, would fly too faſt;
You'd then regret the minute paſt.
Time's fugitive and light as wind!
'Tis indolence that clogs your mind!
That load from off your ſpirits ſhake;
You'll own and grieve for your miſtake.
A while your thoughtleſs ſpleen ſuſpend,
Then read, and (if you can) attend.

As PLUTUS, to divert his care,
Walk'd forth one morn to take the air,

CUPID

CUPID o'ertook his ſtrutting pace.
Each ſtar'd upon the ſtranger's face,
Till recollection ſet 'em right;
For each knew t'other but by ſight.
After ſome complimental talk,
TIME met 'em, bow'd, and join'd their walk.
Their chat on various ſubjects ran,
But moſt, what each had done for man.
PLUTUS aſſumes a haughty air,
Juſt like our purſe-proud fellows here.
Let kings (ſays he) let cobblers tell,
Whoſe gifts among mankind excel.
Conſider courts: What draws their train?
Think you 'tis loyalty, or gain?
That ſtateſman hath the ſtrongeſt hold,
Whoſe tool of politicks is gold.
By that, in former reigns, 'tis ſaid,
The knave in power hath ſenates led.
By that alone he ſway'd debates,
Enrich'd himſelf, and beggar'd ſtates.
Forego your boaſt. You muſt conclude,
That's moſt eſteem'd that's moſt purſu'd.
Think too, in what a woeful plight
That wretch much live whoſe pocket's light.
Are not his hours by want depreſt?
Penurious care corrodes his breaſt.
Without reſpect, or love, or friends,
His ſolitary day deſcends.
You might, ſays CUPID, doubt my parts,
My knowledge too in human hearts,
Should I the pow'r of gold diſpute,
Which great examples might confute,
I know, when nothing elſe prevails,
Perſuaſive money ſeldom fails;
That beauty too (like other wares)
Its price, as well as conſcience, bears.
Then marriage (as of late profeſs'd)
Is but a money jobb at beſt.
Conſent, compliance may be ſo'd:
But love's beyond the price of gold.

Smug-

Smugglers there are, who, by retale,
Expoſe what they call love, to ſale,
Such bargains are an arrant cheat:
You purchaſe flatt'ry and deceit.
Thoſe who true have ever try'd,
(The common cares of life ſupply'd)
No wants endure, no wiſhes make,
But ev'ry real joy partake.
All comfort on themſelves depends;
They want nor power, nor wealth, nor friends.
Love then hath ev'ry bliſs in ſtore:
'Tis friendſhip, and 'tis ſomething more.
Each other ev'ry wiſh they give,
Not to know love, is not to live.
Or love, or money (TIME reply'd)
Were men the queſtion to decide,
Would bear the prize: on both intent,
My boon's neglected or miſpent.
'Tis I who meaſure vital ſpace,
And deal out years to human race.
Though little priz'd, and ſeldom ſought;
Without me love and gold are nought.
How does the miſer time employ?
Did I e'er ſee him life enjoy?
By me forſook, the hoards he won,
Are ſcatter'd by his laviſh ſon.
By me all uſeful arts are gain'd;
Wealth, learning, wiſdom is attain'd.
Who then would think (ſince ſuch my pow'r)
That e'er I knew an idle hour?
So ſubtle and ſo ſwift I fly,
Love's not more fugitive than I.
Who hath not heard coquettes complain
Of days, months, years, miſpent in vain?
For time miſus'd they pine and waſte,
And love's pleaſures never taſte.
Thoſe who direct their time aright,
If love or wealth their hopes excite,
In each purſuit fit hours employ'd,
And both by time have been enjoy'd.

How

How heedleſs then are mortals grown!
How little is their int'reſt known!
In ev'ry view they ought to mind me;
For when once loſt they never find me.
He ſpoke. The gods no more conteſt,
And his ſuperior gift confeſt;
That time (when truly underſtood)
Is the moſt precious earthly good.

FABLE XIV.

The OWL, the SWAN, the COCK, the SPIDER, the ASS, and the FARMER.

TO A MOTHER.

CONverſing with your ſprightly boys,
Your eyes have ſpoke the Mother's joys,
With what delight I've heard you quote
Their ſayings in imperfect note!
I grant, in body and in mind,
Nature appears profuſely kind.
Truſt not to that. Act you your part;
Imprint juſt morals on their heart;
Impartially their talents ſcan:
Juſt education forms the man.
Perhaps (their genius yet unknown)
Each lot of life's a ready thrown;
That this ſhall plead, the next ſhall fight,
The laſt aſſert the church's right.
I cenſure not the fond intent;
But how precarious is th' event!
By talents miſ-apply'd and croſt,
Conſider, all your ſons are loſt.
One day (the tale's by MARTIAL penn'd)
A father thus addreſs'd his friend.
To train my boy, and call forth ſenſe,
You know I've ſtuck at no expence;

I've try'd him in the sev'ral arts,
(The lad no doubt hath latent parts)
Yet trying all, he nothing knows;
But, crab-like, rather backward goes.
Teach me what yet remains undone;
'Tis your advice shall fix my son.
Sir, says the friend, I've weigh'd the matter;
Excuse me, for I scorn to flatter:
Make him (nor think his genius checkt)
A herald or an architect.
Perhaps (as commonly 'tis known)
He heard th' advice, and took his own.
The boy wants wit; he's set to school,
Where learning but improves the fool:
The college next must give him parts,
And cram him with the lib'ral arts.
Whether he blunders at the bar,
Or owes his infamy to war;
Or if by licence or degree
The sexton shares the doctor's fee;
Or from the pulpit by the hour
He weekly floods of nonsense pour;
We find (th' intent of nature foil'd)
A tailor or a butcher spoil'd.
Thus ministers have royal boons
Conferr'd on blockheads and buffoons:
In spite of nature, merit, wit,
Their friends for ev'ry post were fit.
But now let ev'ry muse confess
That merit finds its due success.
Th' examples of our days regard;
Where's virtue seen without reward?
Distinguish'd and in place you find
Desert and worth of ev'ry kind.
Survey the rev'rend bench, and see,
Religion, learning, piety:
The patron, ere he recommends,
Sees his own image in his friend's.
Is honesty disgrac'd and poor?
What is't to us what was before?

We

We all of times corrupt have heard,
When paltry minions were preferr'd;
When all great offices, by dozens,
Were fill'd by brothers, ſons, and couſins.
What matter ignorance and pride?
The man was happily ally'd.
Provided that his clerk was good,
What though he nothing underſtood?
In church and ſtate, the ſorry race
Grew more conſpicuous fools in place.
Such heads, as then a treaty made,
Had bungled in the cobbler's trade.
Conſider, patrons, that ſuch elves
Expoſe your folly with themſelves.
'Tis yours, as 'tis the parent's care,
To fix each genius in its ſphere.
Your partial hand can wealth diſpenſe,
But never give a blockhead ſenſe.

An Owl of magiſterial air,
Of ſolemn voice, of brow auſtere,
Aſſum'd the pride of human race,
And bore his wiſdom in his face;
Not to depreciate learned eyes,
I've ſeen a pedant look as wiſe.
Within a barn, from noiſe retir'd,
He ſcorn'd the world, himſelf admir'd;
And, like an antient ſage, conceal'd
The follies public life reveal'd.
Philoſophers of old, he read,
Their country's youth, to ſcience bred,
Their manners form'd for ev'ry ſtation,
And deſtin'd each his occupation.
When XENOPHON, by numbers brav'd,
Retreated, and a people ſav'd,
That laurel was not all his own;
The plant by SOCRATES was ſown.
To ARISTOTLE's greater name
The MACEDONIAN ow'd his fame.

Th' ATHENIAN bird, with pride replete,
Their talents equall'd in conceit:
And, copying the SOCRATIC rule,
Set up for maſter of a ſchool.
Dogmatic jargon learnt by heart,
Trite ſentences, hard terms of art,
To vulgar ears ſeem'd ſo profound,
They fancy'd learning in the ſound.
The ſchool had fame: the crowded place
With pupils ſwarm'd of ev'ry race.
With theſe the Swan's maternal care
Had ſent her ſcarce-fledg'd cygnet heir:
The Hen (though fond and loth to part)
Here lodg'd the darling of her heart:
The Spider, of mechanic kind,
Aſpir'd to ſcience more refin'd:
The Aſs learnt metaphors and tropes,
But moſt on muſic fix'd his hopes.
The pupils now, advanc'd in age,
Were call'd to tread life's buſy ſtage;
And to the maſter 'twas ſubmitted,
That each might to his part be fitted.
The Swan (ſays he) in arms ſhall ſhine:
The ſoldier's glorious toil be thine.
The Cock ſhall mighty wealth attain:
Go, ſeek it on the ſtormy main.
The court ſhall be the ſpider's ſphere:
Pow'r, fortune, ſhall reward him there.
In muſic's art the Aſs's fame
Shall emulate CORELLI's name.
Each took the part that he adviſ'd,
And all were equally deſpiſ'd.
A Farmer, at his folly mov'd,
The dull preceptor thus reprov'd.
Blockhead (ſays he) by what you've done,
One would have thought 'em each your ſon:
For parents, to their offspring blind,
Conſult nor parts nor turn of mind;
But ev'n in infancy decree
What this, what t'other ſon ſhould be.

Had

Had you with judgment weigh'd the caſe,
Their genius thus had fix'd their place.
The Swan had learnt the ſailor's art;
The Cock had play'd the ſoldier's part;
The Spider in the weaver's trade
With credit had a fortune made;
But for the fool, in ev'ry claſs
The blockhead had appear'd an Aſs.

FABLE XV.

The COOK-MAID, the TURNSPIT, and the OX.

TO A POOR MAN.

CONſider man in ev'ry ſphere,
Then tell me, is your lot ſevere?
'Tis murmur, diſcontent, diſtruſt,
That makes you wretched. God is juſt.
I grant, that hunger muſt be fed,
That toil too earns thy daily bread.
What then? Thy wants are ſeen and known.
But ev'ry mortal feels his own.
We're born a reſtleſs needy crew;
Shew me the happier man than you.
ADAM, though bleſt above his kind,
For want of ſocial woman pin'd.
EVE's wants the ſubtle ſerpent ſaw,
Her fickle taſte tranſgreſs'd the law:
Thus fell our ſires; and their diſgrace
The curſe entail'd on human race.
When PHILIP's ſon, by glory led,
Had o'er the globe his empire ſpread;
When altars to his name were dreſs'd,
That he was man, his tears confeſs'd.
The hopes of av'rice are check'd:
The proud man always wants reſpect.

What various wants on pow'r attend?
Ambition never gains its end.
Who hath not heard the rich complain
Of surfeits and corporeal pain?
He, barr'd from ev'ry use of wealth,
Envies the plowman's strength and health.
Another in a beauteous wife
Finds all the miseries of life:
Domestic jars and jealous fear
Imbitter all his days with care.
This wants an heir; the line is lost:
Why was that vain entail ingrost?
Canst thou discern another's mind?
Why is't you envy? Envy's blind.
Tell envy, when she would annoy,
That thousands want what you enjoy.

The dinner must be dish'd at one.
Where's this vexatious Turnspit gone?
Unless the skulking Cur is caught,
The sur-loin's spoil'd, and I'm in fault.
Thus said; (for sure you'll think it fit
That I the Cook-maid's oaths omit)
With all the fury of a Cook,
Her cooler kitchen NAN forsook.
The broomstick o'er her head she waves;
She sweats, she stamps, she puffs, she raves.
The sneaking Cur before her flies:
She whistles, calls; fair speech she tries.
These nought avail. Her choler burns;
The fist and cudgel threat by turns.
With hasty stride she presses near;
He slinks aloof, and howls with fear.
Was ever Cur so curs'd! (he cry'd)
What star did at my birth preside!
Am I for life by compact bound
To tread the wheel's eternal round?
Inglorious task! Of all our race
No slave is half so mean and base.

Had fate a kinder lot aſſign'd,
And form'd me of the lap dog kind,
I then, in higher life employ'd,
Had indolence and eaſe enjoy'd;
And, like a gentleman, careſt,
Had been the lady's fav'rite gueſt.
Or were I ſprung from ſpaniel line,
Was his ſagacious noſtril mine,
By me, their never-erring guide,
From wood and plain their feaſts ſupply'd,
Knights, ſquires, attendant on my pace,
Had ſhar'd the pleaſures of the chace.
Endu'd with native ſtrength and fire,
Why call'd I not the lion ſire?
A lion! ſuch mean views I ſcorn.
Why was I not of woman born?
Who dares with reaſon's pow'r contend?
On man we brutal ſlaves depend:
To him all creatures tribute pay,
And lux'ry employs his day.
An Ox by chance o'erheard his moan,
And thus rebuk'd the lazy drone.
Dare you at partial fate repine?
How kind's your lot compar'd withmine
Decreed to toil, the barb'rous knife
Had ſever'd me from ſocial life;
Urg'd by the ſtimulating goad,
I drag the cumbrous waggon's load:
'Tis mine to tame the ſtubborn plain,
Break the ſtiff ſoil, and houſe the grain;
Yet I without a murmur bear
The various labours of the year.
But then conſider, that one day,
(Perhaps the hour's not far away)
You, by the duties of your poſt,
Shall turn the ſpit when I'm the roaſt:
And for reward ſhall ſhare the feaſt,
I mean, ſhall pick my bones at leaſt.
'Till now, th' aſtoniſh'd Cur replies,
I look'd on all with envious eyes.

How falſe we judge by what appears!
All creatures feel their ſev'ral cares.
If thus yon mighty beaſt complains,
Perhaps man knows ſuperior pains.
Let envy then no more torment:
Think on the Ox, and learn content.
Thus ſaid; cloſe following at her heel,
With chearful heart he mounts the wheel.

FABLE XVI.

The RAVENS, the SEXTON, and the EARTH-WORM.

TO LAURA.

LAURA, methinks you're over-nice.
True. Flatt'ry is a ſhocking vice;
Yet ſure, whene'er the praiſe is juſt,
One may commend without diſguſt.
Am I a privilege deny'd,
Indulg'd by ev'ry tongue beſide?
How ſingular are all your ways!
A woman, and averſe to praiſe!
If 'tis offence ſuch truths to tell,
Why do your merits thus excel?
Since then I dare not ſpeak my mind,
A truth conſpicuous to mankind;
Though in full luſtre ev'ry grace
Diſtinguiſh your celeſtial face;
Though beauties of inferior ray
(Like ſtars before the orb of day)
Turn pale and fade: I check my lays,
Admiring what I dare not praiſe.
If you the tribute due diſdain,
The muſe's mortifying ſtrain
Shall, like a woman, in mere ſpite,
Set beauty in a moral light.

Though

Though ſuch revenge might ſhock the ear
Of many a celebrated fair;
I mean that ſuperficial race
Whoſe thoughts ne'er reach beyond their face;
What's that to you? I but diſpleaſe
Such ever-girliſh ears as theſe.
Virtue can brook the thoughts of age,
That laſts the ſame through ev'ry ſtage.
Though you by time muſt ſuffer more
Than ever woman loſt before;
To age is ſuch indiff'rence ſhown,
As if your face were not your own.
Were you by ANTONINUS taught?
Or is it native ſtrength of thought,
That thus, without concern or fright,
You view yourſelf by reaſon's light?
Thoſe eyes of ſo divine a ray,
What are they? Mould'ring, mortal clay.
Thoſe features, caſt in heav'nly mould,
Shall, like my coarſer earth, grow old;
Like common graſs, the faireſt flow'r
Muſt feel the hoary ſeaſon's pow'r.
How weak, how vain is human pride!
Dares man upon himſelf confide?
The wretch who glories in his gain,
Amaſſes heaps on heaps in vain.
Why loſe we life in anxious cares,
To lay in hoards for future years?
Can thoſe (when tortur'd by diſeaſe)
Chear our ſick heart, or purchaſe eaſe?
Can thoſe prolong one gaſp of breath,
Or calm the troubled hour of death.
What's beauty? Call ye that your own?
A flow'r that fades as ſoon as blown.
What's man in all his boaſt of ſway?
Perhaps the tyrant of a day.
Alike the laws of life take place
Through ev'ry branch of human race.
The monarch of long regal line
Was rais'd from duſt as frail as mine.

Can

Can he pour health into his veins,
Or cool the fever's reſtleſs pains?
Can he (worn down in nature's courſe)
New-brace his feeble nerves with force?
Can he (how vain is mortal pow'r!)
Stretch life beyond the deſtin'd hour?
Conſider, man; weigh well thy frame;
The king, the beggar is the ſame.
Duſt form'd us all. Each breathes his day,
Then ſinks into his native clay.
Beneath a venerable yew,
That in the lonely church-yard grew,
Two Ravens ſat. In ſolemn croak
Thus one his hungry friend beſpoke.
Methinks I ſcent ſome rich repaſt;
The ſavour ſtrengthens with the blaſt:
Snuff then, the promis'd feaſt inhale;
I taſte the carcaſe in the gale.
Near yonder trees, the farmer's ſteed,
From toil and daily drug'ry freed,
Hath groan'd his laſt. A dainty treat!
To birds of taſte delicious meat.
A Sexton, buſy at his trade,
To hear their chat ſuſpends his ſpade.
Death ſtruck him with no farther thought,
Than merely as the fees he brought.
Was ever two ſuch blund'ring fowls,
In brains and manners leſs than owls!
Blockheads, ſays he, learn more reſpect,
Know ye on whom you thus reflect?
In this ſame grave (who does me right,
Muſt own the work is ſtrong and tight).
The 'Squire that yon fair hall poſſeſs'd,
To-night ſhall lay his bones at reſt.
Whence could the groſs miſtake proceed?
The 'Squire was ſomewhat fat indeed.
What then? The meaneſt bird of prey
Such want of ſenſe could ne'er betray:
For ſure ſome difference muſt be found
(Suppoſe the ſmelling organ ſound)

In carcaſſes (ſay what we can)
Or where's the dignity of man?
With due reſpect to human race,
The Ravens undertook the caſe.
In ſuch ſimilitude of ſcent,
Man ne'er could think reflexions meant.
As epicures extol a treat,
And ſeem their ſav'ry words to eat,
They prais'd dead horſe, luxurious food,
The ven'ſon of the preſcient brood.
The Sexton's indignation mov'd,
The mean compariſon reprov'd;
Their undiſcerning palate blam'd,
Which two-legg'd carrion thus defam'd.
Reproachful ſpeech from either ſide
The want of argument ſupply'd:
They rail, reviſe: as often ends
The conteſt of diſputing friends.
Hold, ſays the Fowl; ſince human pride
With confutation ne'er comply'd,
Let's ſtate the caſe, and then refer
The knotty point: for taſte may err.
As thus he ſpoke, from out the mold
An Earth-worm, huge of ſize, unroll'd
His monſtrous length. They ſtrait agree
To chuſe him as their referee.
So to th' experience of his jaws,
Each ſtates the merits of the cauſe.
He paus'd, and with a ſolemn tone
Thus made his ſage opinion known.
On carcaſes of ev'ry kind
This maw hath elegantly din'd;
Provok'd by luxury or need,
On beaſt, or fowl, or man, I feed:
Such ſmall diſtinction's in the ſavour,
By turns I chuſe the fancy'd flavour.
Yet I muſt own (that human beaſt)
A glutton is the rankeſt feaſt.
Man, ceaſe this boaſt; for human pride
Hath various tracts to range beſide.

The prince who kept the world in awe,
The judge whose dictate fix'd the law,
The rich, the poor, the great, the small,
Are levell'd: Death confounds 'em all.
Then think not that we reptiles share
Such cates, such elegance of fare:
The only true and real good
Of man was never vermin's food.
'Tis seated in th' immortal mind;
Virtue distinguishes mankind,
And that (as yet ne'er harbour'd here)
Mounts with the soul we know not where.
So, good man Sexton, since the case
Appears with such a dubious face,
To neither I the cause determine,
For diff'rent tastes please diff'rent vermin.

ERRATUM.

In Fable XVI. page 27, to the 23d line from the top, add

Who then can such a friend forsake?

FINIS.